



# **Moving Thetford Forward**

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

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD**

**Held on Thursday, 27 November, 2008 at 10.00 a.m. at Level 8, Breckland House, St. Nicholas Street, Thetford**

### **Present (Voting Members)**

Cllr Paul Claussen (PDC)  
Cllr Ann Steward (AS)  
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (SCA)  
Cllr William Nunn (WN) (**Chairman**)  
Cllr Daniel Cox (DC)  
Cllr Jennifer Chamberlin (JC)  
Cllr Robert Kybird (RGK)  
Cllr Bob King (BK)  
Cllr Tony Poulter (TP)  
Martin Aust (MA)  
Giles Brockman (GB)  
John Connolly (JCo)  
Neil Stott (NS)  
Mary Marston (MM) (Observer Role)  
David Napier (DN) (Observer Role)

### **Representing**

Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Thetford Town Council  
Croxton Parish Council  
Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council  
Flagship Housing Group  
Forestry Commission  
Thetford Business Forum  
Keystone Development Trust  
Government Office, East of England  
Chairman of MTF Officer Group

### **Present (Non-Voting Members)**

Andrea Long (AL)  
Trevor Holden (TH)  
Tim Leader (TL)  
Martin Peckitt (MP)  
Mark Stanton (MS)  
Ed Chambers (ECh)  
Susan Glossop (SG)  
Jodie Canham (JCa)  
Richard Kay (RKay)  
Owen Burnette Jenkins (OBJ)  
Paul Crick (PCr)

Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Breckland Council  
Thetford Town Council  
Thetford Town Council  
Breckland Council – Growth Point Team  
Breckland Council – Growth Point Team  
Norfolk County Council  
Norfolk County Council

### **Also Present (Non-Members)**

Cllr Albert Paines  
Cllr Thelma Paines

Thetford Town Council  
Thetford Town & Norfolk County Councils

### **In attendance**

Elaine Wilkes  
Karl Kropf (KK)  
Tom Evans (TE)  
Oliver Bone (OB)  
Laura Matthews (LM)

Senior Member Services Officer (BDC)  
Roger Evans Associates (for item 7)  
Roger Evans Associates (for item 7)  
Thetford Museum (for item 8)  
Thetford Museum (for item 8)

### **Apologies for Absence Received**

Cllr Steve Dorrington  
Mike Goulding  
Jo Pearson  
David Potter  
Tara Studholme-Lyons  
Alec (Sandy) Witton

Norfolk County Council  
English Partnerships  
Local Business  
Inspire East  
NHS Norfolk  
Land Representative

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**1. INTRODUCTION AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

No declarations of interest were made.

**2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

**2.1 Board Meeting – 9 October 2008**

(a) Thetford Growth Proposals and Thetford Museum (page 4)

JC sought clarification on the grant referred to in this item, which indicated that the County Council would fund the whole Museum project, whereas she had understood that it would be 50-50 shared funding between the County Council and the MTF.

The minute was considered to be correctly stated but it was agreed to consider the question raised by JC under agenda item 10 later in the meeting (item 10.1 below refers).

(b) Adoption

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 October 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

**2.2 Officer Meeting – 13 November 2008**

(a) Draft Thetford Area Action Plan – Preferred Options (minute no. 5)

DN stated that this item did not fully record all the main issues raised at the meeting. In particular, he felt there was insufficient emphasis on the issues relating to regeneration of the town.

RKay accepted the point made by DN and undertook to refer the matter back to the Officer Group's next meeting to correct the minute.

RKay

(b) Adoption

Subject to the reference back of minute no. 5 as referred to in (a) above, the minutes of the Officer Group meeting held on 13 November 2008 were received and noted.

**3. GROWTH POINT TEAM UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

RKay presented the report and the following items were discussed:

(a) Thetford Neighbourhood Forum: 21 October 2008 (paragraph 3.2.6)

This had been a well-attended event, with a good level of

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engagement.

The next Forum was to take place in April and the Board discussed the format for this.

TH proposed that the three tiers of elected members on the MTF Board and Thetford Task Force (TTF) should lead the meeting, to provide updates on their groups' respective areas of work and progress of actions to date, with officers providing technical information as necessary.

JC highlighted the role of education which would make a significant contribution to the MTF project and noted this had not been mentioned at the last Forum.

Members also agreed to ensure officer representatives were on hand at the meeting to answer questions on the various County and District service areas, for example household waste and waste management.

It was accepted that members needed to take the opportunity to introduce themselves on the stage, which had been missed last time. This would help change the emphasis to a MTF / TTF led event.

(b) Preferred Options (paragraph 3.2.9)

DN advised that the Executive Principal of Humanities at the Charles Burrell High School and the Rosemary Musker High School had undertaken to liaise with NB regarding under-18s involvement.

(c) Green Grants Scheme (paragraph 3.2.13)

AS reported on the first meeting of the panel which had taken place the previous day.

Six proposals had been considered and the meeting had been very positive.

Four grants had been agreed, as follows:

- Norwich Road School – to create a flower and vegetable garden - £500
- Mundford Road Allotment Club – to erect a shed for storing tools and to provide an energy supply to the site, which had grown considerably over the years and now had 64 members - £500
- Abbey Residents Association – in principle agreement, subject to the receipt of details regarding future maintenance, to enhance an open space area and provide seating - £250
- Thetford Forgotten Garden – to enhance the site - £1000

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Two further applications had been considered but further details had been requested before a decision could be made. These applicants were:

- Abbey Neighbourhood Centre – to provide flowerbeds, railings, etc. to enhance the area
- Barnham Action Group

It was noted that Breckland's marketing and communications department were happy to promote the scheme on behalf of the MTF.

RGK asked whether the scheme allowed for applications from private property owners. RKay advised that the scheme was aimed primarily at community groups but applications from private owners or organisations could be considered if they were being made on behalf of a community group and could demonstrate community support for the scheme.

On grant funding generally, JC raised awareness of grant schemes available through Norfolk County Council's Children's Services – for example, the Norfolk Youth Fund and a 'Dragons' Den' type scheme (aimed at 8 – 10 year olds).

(d) Staffing (paragraph 3.2.14)

RKay introduced two new officers:

- Jodie Canham – part-time Administrative Officer, supporting the GP team, and
- Martin Peckitt – Programme Manager, sitting within the BDC Economic Development team.

**4. THETFORD HEALTHY TOWN BID (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

RKay presented the report on the success of this bid and recommendations on the way forward, including the structure and arrangements to ensure project delivery.

The funding awarded was £900,000 over three years, with the PCT as the accounting body. The MTF would 'steer' the project overall, working closely with all partners.

A detailed business plan was required to be submitted to the Department of Health by February 2009 to secure the funding for years 2 and 3.

So far as the recommendation on the project management structure was concerned, discussion took place on whether it would be better to have a dedicated project management team, rather than split this between the existing BDC and NHS Norfolk staff as proposed.

Due to current uncertainties and a rapidly evolving process, it was agreed to defer a decision pending completion of the business plan.

It was agreed, however, that there was a need to commence with certain research elements of the early delivery work.

**RECOMMEND** to NHS Norfolk that

- (1) NHS Norfolk delegate funds and project delivery to appropriate organisations or companies based upon individual Service Level Agreements (SLAs) or similar;
- (2) a decision on project management arrangements be deferred pending completion and consideration of the business plan;
- (3) funds be set aside for a planning policy officer to be appointed, to sit within the Growth Point team and funding be given to Breckland Council to cover costs in the form of an SLA between NHS Norfolk and Breckland Council (subject to Breckland Council approval);
- (4) funds be set aside for a community health improvement specialist to be appointed, to sit within Breckland Council's Sustainable Communities team and funding be given to Breckland Council to cover costs in the form of an SLA between NHS Norfolk and Breckland Council (subject to Breckland Council approval);
- (5) the MTF Board oversees overall project management and monitoring and make recommendations to NHS Norfolk as appropriate;
- (6) the MTF Board recommends a project plan by the end of January 2009, for subsequent approval by NHS Norfolk and submission to the Department of Health by the end of February as required; such business plan to form the basis of subsequent SLAs.

**AGREED** that

- (1) the nomination of a Board Champion for Health be agreed in principle and further consideration of this be deferred to the next meeting of the Board;
- (2) the allocation of up to £7,500 revenue fund spend from available MTF Growth Point revenue budgets to facilitate the early delivery of baseline projects be approved.

**5. EXISTING ESTATES PROJECT (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

MA presented the report which put forward a number of proposals from Peddars Way Housing Association (Flagship Housing) for funding from the MTF Business Plan budget of £100,000 for existing estate regeneration projects.

The proposed schemes, in order of priority, were:

1. Chester/Coventry Way – fencing and gating of green open

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RKay

RKay

**Action by**

- space areas - Estimated cost £7,000
2. Prior Stephen Way – creation of formal grass crete parking – Estimated cost £30,000
  3. Salisbury Way/York Way communal sheltered gardens enhancement – Estimated cost £40,000
  4. Gloucester Way flats communal area improvements and lighting – Estimated cost £25-£30,000
  5. Fulmerston Road sheltered scheme – provision of fencing and gated access – Estimated cost £35,000

Subject to ensuring consultations with key stakeholders (in particular, Thetford Town Council and the Police) and the local communities, the Board considered the proposals were acceptable in principle, as they offered a good fit with what was envisaged when the budget was agreed.

RKay confirmed that all the proposed schemes would be subject to detailed costing and an SLA would be agreed with BDC and the provider and would specify consultation with the Town Council.

Where necessary, schemes would also be subject to normal planning processes.

RGK indicated that the report could be referred to the Town Council's next planning committee meeting. He also felt that the proposals relating to green spaces could tie in with the Health Town project.

**AGREED** that

- (1) in principle support be given to the proposed schemes as outlined in the report, subject to consultation with key stakeholders (in particular, Thetford Town Council and the Police) and the local communities and to detailed costs and SLAs being agreed with Breckland Council and the provider;
- (2) subject to (1) above, authority be delegated to RKay to approve detailed schemes.

RKay

**6. LOCAL TRANSPORT PROJECT (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

PCr presented the report, which sought approval for project funding for a scheme at Croxton Road as part of the MTF Business Plan £200,000 budget for local transport projects. The report also informed the Board of other local transport projects in Thetford.

The Croxton Road scheme would deliver a series of improvements to road crossings to assist the community, especially school children attending the various schools in the locality. The total scheme cost amounted to approximately £170,000 and it was anticipated the scheme could be delivered in the 2009-10 financial year, following detailed design and consultation. This would be a considerable addition to the programme of local transport works to be implemented by the County Council during 2009 through joint working and funding by MTF and the County Council.

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It was noted that the County Council would cover any additional costs above £170,000, as well as paying for feasibility studies into a long term project for shared use facilities (i.e. pedestrian / cycle facility) along the entire Croxton Road, and additionally along Mundford Road (All to junction with Croxton Road) and along London Road (Retail Park to town centre).

Progress on other local transport schemes in the town as outlined in the report was noted.

**AGREED** that

(1) approval be given to £170,000 capital funding to deliver a set of projects on Croxton Road related to safer crossings. The project to be delivered via Norfolk County Council.

PCr/OBJ

(2) the Board notes the progress on other local transport schemes in Thetford.

**7. THETFORD AREA ACTION PLAN – DRAFT PREFERRED OPTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

**7.1 Presentation by Roger Evans Associates**

KK of REA Ltd gave a presentation to the Board of their recommended urban framework for a future Thetford.

The presentation consisted of a set of maps to indicate the broad strategic locations for major growth and other significant infrastructure for the town.

KK explained that his company's brief was to provide graphic key diagrams to represent the preferred options. The findings were the results of workshops and consultations with partners and officers. However, their brief had not included the issue of regeneration of existing estates and the town centre.

Key issues identified during preparation of the plan included the overall extent of future development and constraints, open space, corridors of movement (which were key to integration) and location of the sub-centres to the town centre.

The spatial vision was made up of a strong combination of elements – e.g. town, forest, river and areas of heath, some of which had issues or constraints around them. A key issue was the Special Protection Area and its buffer zone. The size of the buffer zone in relation to stone curlews was 1500 metres, which effectively ruled out potential growth in the south-east of the area. This was a significant constraint.

Other constraints arose from the public consultation, which indicated reluctance for development north of the A11.

KK explained the overall choice of options was limited.

KK went on to explain the maps illustrating the topography, green infrastructure framework, key routes and centres, and land use

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centres and growth scenarios.

DN drew attention to the Shadwell land north of the Diss Road and his understanding that the landowner desired not to offer than land for any form of development.

RKay responded by explaining that the map provided a framework and that the area of the country park shown represented the current preferred solution. It was recognised that landowners would have issues with what was being proposed but these would have to be negotiated through the formal processes leading up to the adoption of the Area Action Plan.

KK added that in a technical sense, the master plan was necessary to meet development requirements and the level of development warranted the need for the country park, as well as to relieve the additional pressures on Barnham Cross Common that would naturally stem from increased growth in the town.

NS referred to the need to balance the west of the town and the town centre with the growth areas. He felt there was a risk that the town could find itself split into two, particularly bearing in mind that the western area of the town tended to be less affluent and, consequently, less attractive to developers. He also asked if redevelopment of the Abbey Estate had been discounted.

On the latter point, RKay advised that wholesale redevelopment of the Abbey Estate was not being promoted but there would likely be some small redevelopment.

MA acknowledged the concerns being expressed. From the Housing Association's point of view, there was concern that it could find existing estates become even less popular. Therefore, the affordable housing provisions would have to include a range of tenure to attract people to live and work in the area. In this, it would be important to ensure that existing estates did not get left behind and that through partnership working the improvement of existing estates was considered.

JCo asked whether the 12km circular route could be upgraded to incorporate a cycleway and RKay confirmed this could be done.

GB stated that the Forestry Commission would welcome the opportunity to work with partners and REA Ltd on the wider aspects of growth in relation to the forest areas and the Commission's future plans. He offered to make a presentation to a future meeting of the Board on the subject, which was welcomed by the Chairman.

In addition to the concerns expressed above, BK questioned the blanket protection zone in relation to the stone curlews habitat, which he felt was wrong and should be challenged.

AL explained that the protection zone had been fully and independently researched and the results were supported by Natural England and the RSPB. The Appropriate Assessment had to demonstrate there would be no adverse impact on European Protected Sites and the 1500 km buffer zone was the minimum

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distance allowed. The public consultation on the LDF Core Strategy would commence in January 2009 and the findings could be challenged then and at the subsequent Public Examination later in the year. However, AL felt it would be very difficult to produce primary evidence to the contrary of what was included in the Appropriate Assessment.

RGK highlighted the importance of the proposed education facility to the use and regeneration of the town centre. He felt this would be key to extending daytime activity in the town and for the general welfare of people and the town as a whole. He also suggested that it would be very useful if the green bridge could be relocated to cross the trunk road.

JC made the point that the Abbey Barn was a Grade I listed building of national importance but was not featured in the list of historic buildings on the map. KK undertook to ensure this building was added.

JC also felt that provision also needed to be made for café and other facilities in the town centre to support the proposed educational facility.

RGK pointed out that the map did not show the retail area around the Sainsbury's supermarket as a sub-centre of the town.

In concluding this part of the discussions, RK outlined the timetable and committee processes governing the consideration of the Action Plan, leading up to public consultation in February 2009. There would be another stage of consultation 12 months beyond that.

Members were asked to let RKay have any further comments as soon as possible, particularly if there was anything of a fundamental nature.

All

**7.2 Draft Preferred Options Document**

RKay presented the report and explained that the Preferred Options document set out the written policies proposed in the Area Action Plan. The master plan referred to above would sit within this document.

The following items were highlighted:

- The theme of the document was to respect the historic nature of the town whilst recognising the healthy lifestyle approach
- Chapter 5: Town Centre, Shops and Other Services: There were two key elements giving the focus on town centre regeneration:
  - (i) Retail Development (policy, page 20): the vast majority of retail development was allocated to the town centre, with only relatively small areas allocated to areas outside the town centre
  - (ii) Thetford Town Centre Zones (policy, page 23): the zones set the framework to enable regeneration

**Action by**

- Chapter 6: Social Infrastructure: This chapter covered the various important elements to support communities.

The section on managing habitats (pages 34/35) covered those aspects that were fundamental to the Appropriate Assessment for the TAAP and would involve a lot of work and money to ensure the protection and future maintenance of the area.

- Chapter 7: Transport - The policy on Thetford Train Station and Surrounding Area was to be amended by the deletion of the option for the relocation of the train station (page 41), as the costs had since been shown to be prohibitive.
- Chapter 8: Major Development Locations – These were enabling policies to ensure timely and co-ordinated delivery.
- Chapter 9: Improving Existing Communities and Environment – this chapter focused on the issues of transforming Thetford as a whole, including improving existing communities and other parts of the built and green environment.
- Chapter 10: Making it Happen – The policy on page 54 outlined proposals for a tariff arrangement for development contributions to community infrastructure. It was an important policy, which offered a simpler solution to the existing Section 106 process and the funding achieved would cover the infrastructure needs for the whole town. There was a broad support by developers across the country for a tariff-based approach but key to its success would be the level of fee to be decided. The proposed management arrangements for the new community infrastructure were set out in the policy on page 58.

The Board's agreement was sought to recommend the document to Breckland Council for public consultation in February 2009.

BK expressed concern that the present map excluded half of the areas on which people gave their views because of other constraints. He felt that this could give rise to problems of people feeling disenfranchised.

AL advised that it would be possible to firm up on the issues of the constraints at a later stage but the most popular locations from the questionnaire responses were consistent with what was emerging in the preferred options, provided these were made clear and gave weight to the issues raised since.

RKay answered a number of general questions, following which it was

**AGREED** that

- (1) the draft Thetford Area Action Plan – Preferred Options document be approved, subject to amendments as necessary and to (2) below, and recommended to Breckland Council for public consultation;

RKay

**Action by**

- (2) the Board welcomes and agrees the MTF Officer Group suggestion of considering for a final time the technical elements of the draft document at a special meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December, incorporating any additional word changes as necessary to ensure a robust and clear Plan prior to its formal consideration by Breckland Council. No substantial or fundamental changes were to be made by the Officer Group which would radically change the thrust of the Plan, but rather changes which ensure clarity, tightness and deliverability of policies;
- (3) an additional short leaflet, with high graphic content, be produced as part of the consultation process and which includes a comments section for people to respond to the proposals. The leaflet to be distributed to all households, possibly as an insert in the monthly "About Thetford" magazine;
- (4) funding be approved as necessary to print the document and leaflet, with funds taken from either the Breckland Council LDF budget if possible, or from the Growth Point Revenue budget (estimated at no more than £10,000), with the latter scenario meaning the delay of one of the evidence base projects (Energy Stage 2, Water Cycle Study Stage 2, Design Work Stage 2) being pushed back to April 2009 rather than a February 2009 start.

**8. THETFORD MUSEUM – PRESENTATION (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

OB presented the report and gave a short presentation on the work of the Thetford Museum and the New Communities project being run by museum staff to engage with the public over the planned growth for Thetford to increase understanding and involvement.

LM presented a case study to illustrate the work on public consultation.

An exhibition entitled "Our Thetford: Yesterday and Tomorrow" had been planned to commence on 16 January 2009 at the museum and would help people compare the past and future plans to help inform decisions.

This exhibition would link into a "Planning our Thetford" workshop with Shape East in March 2009.

A New Communities publication was planned for early 2009.

JC emphasised the value of this work in relation to lifelong learning and RGK drew attention to the Shape East conference he had attended at Peterborough, which had demonstrated best practice in this field. He thought this could usefully be used when looking at site specific issues.

NS suggested it would be worthwhile for OB's presentation to be given at the next Neighbourhood Forum.

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The Chairman referred to concerns about the Charles Burrell Museum, which was in danger of closing. SG advised that the Trustees were hopeful of continuing for a further year and, although there were a lot of problems to be resolved, there were also a lot of ideas for its future operation.

Members agreed the value of this museum was very important to the town's industrial and engineering heritage and that it would be very sad if the museum was to close.

The museum had received a lot of funding over the years and the point was made that any rescue package needed to be supported by a strong business plan. It was also noted that there were specific reasons for the current financial problems stemming from the use of funding from their reserves to run a special project and the withdrawal of their Heritage Lottery Bid. One of the main issues for the museum's future was to secure £10,000 p.a. to fund a co-ordinator post.

The position was noted and OB and LM were thanked for their presentation.

**9. MTF MANAGEMENT ISSUES (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

**9.1 Risk Management**

The report was noted.

**9.2 Finance Update**

The report was noted.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

**10.1 Thetford Growth Proposals and Thetford Museum**

Further to minute 2.1 above, JC sought clarification on the question of museum funding, where she understood the MTF had given a commitment to a 50-50 share of contribution with the NCC.

RKay stated that at the meeting before last, the Board had decided not to contribute towards the exhibition and that it was understood the NCC had found the money for this. JC confirmed that NCC had given an undertaking that the exhibition would happen.

**10.2 Dualling of the A11**

PCr drew attention to the news that the Government had agreed to bring forward the programme for the A11 dualling. This was good news which would have a massive impact on the town.

**10.3 Bus Station**

RKay updated the Board on progress of the bus station project, which was progressing well. Positive discussions had taken place with landowners.

**Action by**

The project was being overseen by BDC with English Partnerships and the Board's agreement was sought to the release of £45,000 from the Business Plan capital budget to enable further negotiations on land assembly (£15,000) and survey works (£30,000) to progress. It was acknowledged that there would be an element of risk in this work.

While wishing to see the project progress, the Board was mindful that public expectations had been raised but that, although work had commenced on the issue of land assembly, more detailed forward planning on the project was needed to ensure it could be fully funded and that the various elements of the project were well co-ordinated between the three lead organisations (BDC, English Partnerships and NCC).

In this connection, OBJ confirmed that the bus station had not been proposed at the time the County Council's capital budget had been set and therefore was not included in the current works programme. There remained a lot of issues to be resolved before it could be decided that the project was viable or not.

**AGREED** that

- (a) £45,000 could be used from agreed budgets to continue land assembly issues for the bus station, though care should be taken to spend only what was absolutely necessary until there was more certainty on overall project delivery; and
- (b) an agenda item be brought to the next Board meeting which sets out a more detailed update on the bus station and covering items such as anticipated overall cost, key milestones and likely funding sources for the bus station.

RKay, OBJ  
and PCr

Note: Cllrs A. Paines and T. Paines left the room during the discussions on this item.

The meeting closed at 12.45 p.m.