

Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum

Tuesday 13th July 2021 2-4pm

Council Chamber, South Norfolk House

Minutes

Councillors

In Attendance

Cllr John Toye – North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Paul Claussen – Breckland Council
Cllr Brian Long – Norfolk County Council
Cllr John Fuller – South Norfolk District Council - Chair
Cllr Harry Blathwayt – Broads Authority
Mr Bruce Keith – Broads Authority (Sub)
Cllr Graham Plant - Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Richard Blunt – King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Cllr Mike Stonard – Norwich City Council
Cllr Susan Lawn – Broadland District Council

Apologies

Cllr Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro – Broads Authority

Supporting Officers

In Attendance

Mark Ashwell – North Norfolk District Council
Natalie Beal – Broads Authority
Andrew Darcy – Breckland Council
Stephen Faulkner – Norfolk County Council
Judith Davison – Norwich City Council
Sam Hubbard – Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Ninan Xu – Norfolk County Council
Paul Harris - Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils
Alan Gomm – King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Trevor Wiggett – Strategic Framework Project Manager
John Jones – Norfolk County Council
Andrew Summers – Transport East

Apologies

Rachel Gibbs – Breckland Council
Keith Moore – Environment Agency
Caroline Jeffrey - Norfolk County Council
Cameron Clow – Suffolk County Council

Welcome, introduction and apologies

All members and officers introduced themselves and apologies were noted (as above). Cllr Plant chaired the meeting, on behalf of Cllr Fuller.

Minutes and matters arising from meeting of 22nd April 2021

Previous minutes agreed as accurate.

Transport East

Andrew Summers, Strategic Director of Transport East, gave a presentation on the purpose and scope of the Transport East. The Partnership includes Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Thurrock and Southend, to enable all partners to speak with one voice; to develop a transport strategy and advise government on priorities; accelerate and improve delivery; work beyond boundaries, across the UK. Transport East has published its Business Plan which has been endorsed by Ministers.

The current priority is the development of an ambitious Transport Strategy to 2050 which aims to provide a robust evidence base and making a strategic case for transport investment in the East.

Cllr Long emphasised the importance of not neglecting rural community that are not served by public transport. The favoured mode of transport such as cycling and e-scooters in urban areas are not practical in rural areas and there are many households that suffer from fuel poverty.

Both Cllr Plant and Cllr Claussen have raised the issue of power shortage in the County.

In terms of rail connectivity, Cllr Long highlighted the importance of Ely Junction as a priority project for Transport East to push forward.

Cllr Blathwayt raised the topic of ports in the Broads area and short sea shipping. Andrew agreed to provide further background information on this.

Members and Officers discussed at length on the importance of making a business case to Government on making investment to transport schemes for rural communities such as Norfolk.

Some of top priority schemes/themes collectively agreed by Members include A47, Ely Junction improvements, digital infrastructure and Cambridge to Norwich link.

Members also discussed Government's current project appraisal criteria and how it can be adapted to favour a rural area.

Members re-iterated to Andrew the importance of Transport East in putting together a compelling business case to Government when it comes to its lobbying/influencing spending review effort.

Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework update

Trevor Wiggett gave an update to Members on the latest progress of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.

The refreshed 2021 iteration of the NSPF has been fully endorsed by all Norfolk authorities. The framework has also been signed off by the New Anglia LEP, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, MMO, Water Resources East and Active Norfolk.

The final report on Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy has been completed. Following feedback from the previous Member Forum and workshop, further work on establishing governance arrangements, with Member oversight, clarity on apportionment of funding. It is also proposed that the mitigation package is subject to an immediate review. The approach is subject to negotiations on an emerging Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between the Greater Norwich Authorities and Natural England in connection with the submission of the Greater Norwich Local Plan. If acceptable to all parties, the content of SoCG may form the basis of a Norfolk wide agreement that would be referred to each individual authority for endorsement.

Members discussed this topic at length and agreed that it will be further consideration for each authority on the appropriateness of the current wordings of the SoCG and whether they wish to enter their own SoCG with Natural England. This would in turn affect on whether a County wide agreement can be reached on this matter.

Action:

It was agreed by Members that to take the current draft version of the SoCG between Greater Norwich Authorities and Natural England back to their respective authorities for detailed discussion and consideration.

Neighbouring Counties Update

Ninan Xu, on behalf of Suffolk County Council, gave Members an update on planning matters in Suffolk.

Local Plan Update

A summary report updating members on the latest progress of the local plans have been presented at the forum. Updates noted.

Paul Harris also gave verbal update on the progress of its local plan for South Norfolk.

AOB

The next member forum will be arranged in October 2021, exact date to be confirmed by Ninan Xu.