

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 17 OCTOBER 2024 FROM THE REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL MEETING ON 15 OCTOBER 2024

RD49: CABINET REPORT NORFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY

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Roberta Willner, Head of Economic Development at Norfolk County Council presented the Strategy and explained that the purpose of it was to provide an updated Economic Growth Plan for Norfolk which could assist in prioritising investment. The Strategy had been worked up in conjunction with the West Norfolk Economic Strategy and a series of workshops had taken place to seek the views of Stakeholders.

Information was provided on the key pillars, which included a placemaking and community pillar and also addressed cross cutting themes. Information was also provided on the challenges faced in the County which included connectivity, rural areas, deprivation and skills, but it was also noted that there were positives which could be built on such as key assets which could create economic growth.

The Panel was provided with detail of the engagement and consultation which had taken place and how the Strategy would align with other plans and strategies being produced.

It was hoped that the Strategy would be finalised in December 2024.

The Chair thanked the Head of Economic Development for the report and was pleased to see that the Strategy aligned with other plans and strategies. The Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Assistant Director thanked Roberta Willner for attending the Panel meeting to present the Strategy and informed the Panel that the Borough Council had been engaged in the consultation and workshop activities.

Councillor Ryves addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that the needs of rural areas and communities needed to be considered. He referred to the amount of rural land that had been used for solar farms and how the communities that were impacted by these did not see a benefit. Roberta Willner explained that decarbonisation and sustainability was included in the Strategy as a cross cutting theme, including supporting the expansion of offshore wind farms. It was also explained that the Placemaking and Community pillar would address issues faced by rural communities.

The Panels attention was drawn to the infrastructure section of the Strategy which proposed the creation of an energy action plan which would deal with how Norfolk could take advantage of renewable energy produced and would include lobbying energy providers.

Councillor Blunt commented that the area surrounding the Walpole Sub Station was dominated by solar farms and it was disappointing that local people did not get any benefit from them. He was interested to see what actions would be included in the energy action plan.

Roberta Willner agreed to come back to the Panel at a future date to provide information on the Energy Action Plan, including the consultation process and lobbying work.

The Planning Control Manager provided the Panel with information on what the Council had to do, as a Coastal Authority, in relation to offshore wind farms, which included making representation on the impact of solar farms on local communities. It was noted that there would be a process to follow throughout the Grimsby to Walpole Scheme.

The Leader of the Council reminded those present that a pre-council briefing had been scheduled to update Members on the Grimsby to Walpole Scheme, and he encouraged Members to attend.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Panel for their comments and highlighted that if proposals were introduced to allow the retention of business rates on renewable energy, this would give some wider benefit to the Community.

Roberta Willner agreed to pass on the comments made by the Panel in relation to renewable energy to Norfolk County Council colleagues.

The Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity and Climate Change commented that the Strategy should include opportunities for Rail improvements and Roberta Willner explained that this was included in the Placemaking section.

Councillor Ryves addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that the Strategy should include a Railway Station serving the A10 growth corridor. The Chair explained that the Regeneration and Development Panel had established a Transport and Infrastructure Informal Working Group, which had met prior to this meeting and was working with Norfolk County Council colleagues. He explained that a feasibility study on new Rail locations in the County was being undertaken and locations within the Borough were being considered.

Councillor Blunt commented that tourism was crucial to the area and should not be underplayed within the Strategy. Roberta Willner explained that this was included in one of the priority areas and detail was included on the visitor economy, culture and heritage. She welcomed further suggestions from the Panel on how wording could be strengthened if required.

RESOLVED: The Regeneration and Development Panels supported the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

BCKLWN to endorse the draft Norfolk Economic Strategy, which will also be known as the 'Local Growth Plan' for Norfolk, subject to any amendments suggested by Cabinet.

RD50: CABINET REPORT – CIL APPLICATIONS OVER £50K

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The Planning Control Manager presented the report which presented the CIL applications over £50k which required Cabinet approval under the CIL Governance Framework. Details of the applications that were over £50k were included in the Agenda.

The Chair thanked the Planning Control Manager for the presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Crofts referred to the Outwell application and explained that the railings were in poor state of repair and no organisation had taken ownership of them. The Parish Council would take responsibility for the railings if funding was awarded and this was important for the safety of users of the area. He supported the application for CIL funding.

Councillor Colwell referred to the application for the MUGA at North Creake which was aimed at older children. He asked how many children would benefit from it and the CIL Officer explained that the application stated that it would benefit the wider community and it was noted that the scoring criteria was not based on merit.

Councillor Ratcliffe commented that it was pleasing to see so many communities benefitting from CIL funding.

In response to a question from Councillor Collingham, the CIL Officer explained that the CIL Governance Arrangements were reviewed on an annual basis. The Portfolio Holder for Development and Licensing reassured the Panel that any proposals made as part of the Annual Review would be presented to the Panel for consideration.

Councillor Crofts commented that he supported the application for Emneth as it was a well-used playing field.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet are invited to consider and approve the funding for applications for CIL Infrastructure Funding.

RD51: CABINET REPORT – HUNSTANTON BUS STATION LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

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The Housing Services Manager presented the report which set out proposals for the Borough Council to deliver 21-24 affordable housing units as well as a library on behalf of Norfolk County Council on the Hunstanton Bus Station site alongside the NCC transport interchange improvements.

The Chair thanked the Housing Services Manager for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Beal asked for information on the proposed travel hub and it was explained that this would include a refurbishment of the existing facilities at the bus station including updating the bus loop and adaptations and improvements to the bus shelters, toilets, charging and bicycle storage facilities.

In response to a further question from Councillor Beal it was explained that the installation of a Changing Places Toilet was a welcome part of the scheme as it was a fully accessible facility. Councillor Colwell welcomed the proposals for this as currently there was only one facility in the whole of West Norfolk. It was noted that there were plans for further facilities to be provided across the Borough in the near future. With regards to maintenance and operation of the facilities, the Regeneration Programmes Manager agreed to provide clarification to the Panel.

Councillor Beal referred to the flats to be provided and officers clarified that they would all be let as affordable housing and the Housing Services Manager explained that with regard to local need, this would be looked at on a Borough wide basis and would be based on need.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Everett asked which Registered Social Landlord would manage the properties and it was explained that a further report would be taken through the decision making process to determine this.

The Leader of the Council commented that he was delighted that this stalled site was now being taken forward in partnership with Norfolk County Council and highlighted the Councils good track record in delivering affordable homes.

RESOLVED: The Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

It is recommended that Cabinet resolves:

1. A housing scheme of 21-24 affordable housing units at the Bus Station Site in Hunstanton plus a library in partnership with Norfolk County Council and in consort with the NCC Transport Interchange Scheme (the "Hunstanton Bus Station Proposed Housing Scheme") shall be designed and costed up to RIBA Stage 4 with an approved budget of £250,000
2. The Bus Station Site in Hunstanton is deemed a strategic site for affordable housing deliver.

Recommendations to Full Council:

3. The Capital Programme be amended to include Hunstanton Bus Station Proposed Housing Scheme based on the initial cost estimate of £4m to be funded from affordable housing funding held and ringfenced by the Council of £2.2m and internal borrowing against the capital receipts from the eventual sale of the affordable housing units estimated to be £1.8m

