

### **Norfolk County Strategic Partnership - Joint Scrutiny Panel**

The Norfolk County Strategic Partnership - Joint Scrutiny Panel met at the Norfolk Records Office, County Hall on 20 April 2009 and was attended on behalf of Norwich City Council by Claire Stephenson - Chair of Scrutiny.

A report on Economic Impact in Norfolk was made by the Chief Executive of Shaping Norfolk's Future. He believed that economic decline was slowing down, but Members challenged this robustly, basing their argument on their own observations and experience. Members were also concerned that figures did not give a true picture of the situation. The quality of new jobs was just as important as the quantity especially when well-qualified people were being forced to take much lower paid unskilled jobs and were struggling to pay their bills.

There was a wide range of activities already taking place across the County and the role of the County Strategic Partnership would be to co-ordinate, simplify, and maximise the support and advice on offer. A supplement with advice for businesses would be published in the Eastern Daily Press in early May. Members asked that other ways of disseminating this information should also be considered. A Recession group was due to meet for the first time on 23 April.

A presentation was made on the Strategic Planning Process and utility providers. This outlined work being done with utility providers to ensure that services would be adequate to support development, with particular reference to the Local Development Framework. Concern was expressed that the Environment Agency did not appear to keep records up to date and that bad planning decisions could be made based on their advice. Other concerns included lack of investment in the area by the power companies, water provision, drainage and broadband. Members asked for a briefing paper that they could take back to their Members of Parliament.

Members appreciated the value of the Joint Scrutiny Panel which enabled councillors to come together, without politics, to improve the quality of life for the people of Norfolk.