

NORFOLK COUNTY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY, 2009.

PRESENT:-

Cllr. Philip Cowen	-	(Breckland Council)
Cllr. Ian Graham	-	(Broadland Council)
Cllr. James Joyce	-	(Broadland Council) (Sub)
Cllr. Bertie Collins	-	(Great Yarmouth Borough Council)
Cllr. John Baskerville	-	(Norfolk County Council)
Cllr. Nigel Ripley	-	(North Norfolk District Council)
Cllr. Claire Stephenson	-	(Norwich City Council)
Cllr. Christopher Kemp	-	(South Norfolk Council)

OFFICERS:-

Chris Walton, Caroline Money & Jo Martin	-	(Norfolk County Council)
Steve Goddard	-	(Norwich City Council)
Becky Malkin & Mo Dover	-	(King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council)
Mary Howard	-	(North Norfolk District Council)
Mark Broughton	-	(Breckland Council)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David and Christine Rye, King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Cowen was proposed, seconded and duly elected Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing twelve months.

3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Cllr. Collins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing twelve months.

4. **PROTOCOL, MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCEDURE**

In response to a question from Cllr. Kemp, it was noted that constitutional advice would be available from the Head of Democratic Services of the County Council, through the Monitoring Officer. The Chairman invited Caroline Money to explain further the purpose of the Panel. Caroline Money explained that its role was mainly to consider how the Norfolk County Strategic Partnership had made its decisions, not to examine in great detail (e.g. the topic area) the decisions that had been taken. The Scrutiny process was intended to be a high level function scrutinising the process and

understanding the business plans, acknowledging achievements and highlighting positive issues as well as areas of concern.

Cllr. Kemp sought clarification about who has the responsibility for scrutinising governance arrangements of the NCSP. Caroline Money responded that her interpretation was that this Group had a role in ensuring that the partnership had appropriate governance arrangements in place and she felt that that was clearly part of the Panel's remit. The Chairman explained that he intended meetings to last no more than two hours and members agreed that they would wish to continue to meet at County Hall. The Chairman suggested that representatives from the Panel be invited to attend board meetings in rotation, and observe and feedback orally at the subsequent meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.

It was agreed to adopt the protocol, membership, terms of reference and procedure as set out in the report.

5. NORFOLK COUNTY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING, 17 DECEMBER, 2008.

Caroline Money took the Panel through the briefing note produced subsequent to the Board meeting on 17 December, 2008, which was attached to the agenda.

- Update on CSP Activities

Caroline explained that the majority of the discussion had concerned a general update on the Partnerships activities. A discussion took place on the allocation of second homes money. Local people had been asked to decide how this money should be spent to progress areas of the LAA at risk of not being delivered. Discussion centred on the pilot process and how successful this had been. Norfolk had been invited to take part in the National participatory budgeting Group run by CLG. The Norfolk pilot would be evaluated at the Board at its March meeting and she drew attention to the scorecard which the Board had considered which was available on the website. This would give a snapshot of how the partners felt the process was working and would help it to review the direction of its own activity. An analysis of past years' scoring was also available on <http://www.norfolkambition.gov.uk/>

The Board had decided to take a different approach to the annual conference, with a keynote speaker and a market place themed on climate change. Cllr. Kemp suggested that members of this group could be involved in this project. The Board had considered the impact of the economic downturn on Norfolk yesterday at its Workshop where Shaping Norfolk's Future had made a presentation looking at the current situation, what was happening around the County to enable support to be provided and the wider impact on issues such as health, crime and education. The exercise had come up with a number of outcomes, including the need to be more positive about branding Norfolk, concluded that Norfolk businesses were not faring comparatively badly in the current economic climate, that confidence levels were low, reaffirming the need to raise skills and co-ordinating and clarifying activity for individuals and business across the County. Shaping Norfolk's Future intended to develop the outcomes from this exercise with a partnership action plan for the future.

- Social Research

Caroline explained that the Board had agreed to research the question as to how the skills of Norfolk population could be increased to Level 3 and above. This would be a joint project with the University of East Anglia and a Project Group had been established to identify the best way forward, costings and grants available. It was hoped that the project would allow the Board to understand the hard data it already held better and to work with employers and individuals to establish the triggers that make people decide whether or not to keep learning. It was intended to be a long-term research project and would need to compliment other work around skills that was already taking place through the Partnership.

Cllr. Kemp wondered where the evidence for the necessity of increasing the level of NVQ level qualifications came from. He was concerned that the needs of the economy would be matched to the skills of its workforce and that there would not be jobs for these up-skilled individuals to fill. The Chairman responded that if the County was to attract quality jobs, it was important that the skills of the workforce were matched to them. Whilst he accepted that there was a certain element of “chicken and egg” in this exercise he felt it was crucial that the County was able to demonstrate it had a skilled workforce that could do the job. Cllr. Stephenson agreed it was important to recognise the different levels of skills – academic and non academic and was keen that the social research project would involve schools and pupils. Caroline Money responded that various sectors of population would be involved in the project and again pointed out that it was important to identify triggers that either prompted individuals to do more training or to opt out of training and employment. The Project Team was currently looking at a number of issues and would report back to the Board at its next meeting with a progress report. The Project Team consisted of Graham Brough, Trevor Holden and David Lawrence, advised by Professor John Greenaway and Julie Schofield of UEA. The Panel were encouraged by this Project and asked to be kept informed.

- Norfolk Action

Caroline Money explained that some targets were at risk of not being delivered for various reasons and eight targets had been identified as being particularly challenging. Eleven of the thirty five targets had no baseline data so she was unable to report on progress. Eight other targets were “at risk” but would probably deliver but eight were on full track. The Board had also agreed the allocation of the second homes money, 70% would be devoted to area base grant and 30% to participatory budget pilot. Eighteen projects had been funded in total. The Chairman wondered what monitoring procedures were in place for “drifting” targets and Caroline Money explained that all projects had signed contracts to state that they would start to use the resources within three months of receiving them. Projects which did not deliver on this would be picked up through a monitoring process and an accurate picture on this would be achieved by the summer.

- Comprehensive Area Assessment

The Board had received a report on the Comprehensive Area Assessment and discussed the implications for Norfolk. There would be a Workshop in the Spring between the NCSP and the Audit Commission to start a dialogue about establishing a view of what Norfolk was like.

- Norfolk Strategic Services Co-ordinating Group

Caroline explained that the NCSP had been working with service providers, utility providers and officers from the local development frameworks on the future investment in infrastructure to deliver the housing allocations. The NCSP had been concerned that the long-term view that District's and County Council's were expected to take to deliver Government targets were not reflected in the ambitions of utility providers such as EDF energy. The NCSP had lobbied the Government to require utilities regulators to plan for more than five years in advance to allow the Council to deliver on its targets. It was also raised formally as part of the EDF energy consultation which had recently taken place. A number of members were concerned about the approach taken by the utilities companies and the potential for impacting on the growth in Norfolk.

- Norfolk Community Foundation

The Board had received an update on progress on the NCF and its contribution to the LAA.

- Raising Aspirations

The Board received an update on activities and outcomes achieved by Norfolk Learning Partnership in relation to raising aspirations.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME

The following items were suggested as possible items for the next meeting:-

- The outcome of the recent workshop on the economy.
- The evaluation of Your Norfolk Your Decision.
- Scorecard results.
- The social research project.
- Failing indicators.
- The LAA refresh.

Cllr. Kemp suggested that District Councils and the County Council should be contacted to see if there were any areas of concern that they would wish this Panel to consider (related to the NCSP).

The Panel were keen to receive an update on potentially failing indicators, and to check that they were satisfied with how they were being addressed as part of the refresh.

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on 20 April, 2009 at 9.30 a.m. at County Hall and that subsequent meetings be held on Monday, 6 July, 2009 at 9.30 a.m. – Monday, 2 November, 2009 – 9.30 a.m.

It was asked that email addresses of the members and officers of the Panel be circulated to all and any key website addresses included in that email. It was further agreed that Cllrs. Joyce and Baskerville would attend the next meeting of the Norfolk County Strategic Board and report back to the following Scrutiny Panel and that the next agenda include:-

- Outcomes of the Board meeting, which would include:-
 - Scorecard results.
 - Outcomes from the economy workshop.
 - An evaluation of the social research
 - An update on the refresh.
 - Analysis and further information on the eight indicators “at risk”.
 - Any items suggested by District and County Council.
 - An update on the issue of utilities infrastructure
 - The Panel's Forward Work Programme.

The Panel also noted that it was a public meeting and that the agenda and minutes would be published on the Norfolk Ambition Website.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CW/MJL-NCSPJSPmins14109
20 January, 2009.
(4th Draft)