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**GREAT YARMOUTH ECONOMIC FORUM**

**14 June 2007 – 4.00 pm**

**PRESENT:**

T Aydin (GY People), L Brookes (ANGLE), B Burgess (Chamber of Commerce), A Carr (Great Yarmouth Tourist Authority), Councillor B Collins (Norfolk County Council), H Foale (Learning and Skills Council), M Gouldby (Great Yarmouth Port Users Association), Councillor G Plant (Great Yarmouth Borough Council), M Smith (NWES) and C Williams (Chamber of Commerce).

S Baker (Chairman of Financial Wellbeing Group), D Dukes (Norfolk County Council), T Gonzalez (Learning Forum Chairman) R Lewin (Great Port Users Association) and C Shingler (Better Futures - Norfolk Guidance Service) attended by invitation.

T Howard, P Warner, P Wright and S Davis (Great Yarmouth Borough Council Officials).

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Members were asked, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, to confirm the appointment of Mike Gouldby as Chairman for the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED:**

That Mike Gouldby be appointed as Chairman for the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from P Barry, J Best, I McCreadie, J Steward and T Leonard.

**4. MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2007 were confirmed subject to the addition of D Dukes in the list of attendees.

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

It was noted that there were no matters arising from the minutes which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**6. BETTER FUTURES**

The Forum received a presentation from Chris Shingler – Unit Manager for Norfolk Guidance Service in relation to the Better Futures Project which aimed to provide information, advice, guidance and support to enable beneficiaries to enter learning, self-development and/or work. It was noted that the Projects Manager of Better Futures was now Liff Pedersen. Members received the following figures which showed the progress at the end of Year One of the project:-

- 202 participants (Target 197)
- 127 starts in learning/work (Target 111)
- 130 accessing job search (Target 150).

Chris Shingler reported further on the number of attendees at two elements of the Project namely, Better Chances and Future Skills:-

### **Better Chances**

- 32 workshops (Target 26)
- 251 starts on workshops (Target 138)

### **Future Skills**

- 14 taster courses (Target 8)
- 91 starters on tasters (Target 64).

It was noted that additional funding had helped to exceed the targets for the Better Chances Project. He concluded that 419 participants had been seen, 238 had been male with 181 female.

Clarification was sought as to whether there was a link through to the LEGI Programme and a suggestion was made that reference could be made to NWES to ensure the link was made and to ask them how many people they had referred to these projects.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Chris Shingler be thanked for his progress report in relation to the Better Futures Project and a copy of his presentation be circulated to all Members.

## **7. FINANCIAL WELLBEING GROUP**

Simon Baker referred to the discussions held at the last meeting which suggested the need for a link between the Financial Wellbeing Group and the Economic Forum. He explained that the Wellbeing Group had struggled with its direction as the Social Forum's target for increasing income by 2008 had been unrealistic and the timescale to achieve this needed to be extended. It was felt that the Wellbeing Group had a natural affiliation to Economic issues although some of its work would still need to be reported to the Social Forum. He queried whether the present link was strong enough or whether the Wellbeing Group should become a Sub-Group of the Economic Forum and undertake projects whilst also maintaining its links with the Social Forum.

The point was made that it was important to at least have a dialogue between the Groups to stop the silo effect that currently existed. It was

suggested that the benefits of stronger links between the Wellbeing Group and the Economic Forum might become clearer in due course.

**RESOLVED:**

That the principle of stronger links between the Financial Wellbeing Working Group and the Economic Forum be agreed.

## **8. NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUNDING – UNDERSPEND**

The Forum received the LSP Officer's report which gave details of the underspend in the projects supported by the Economic Forum. It was noted that NWES had identified an underspend for their element in the current year of £35,000 and the Forum was asked to identify the best way of re-investing the money. NWES had discussed the issue with CTS who had agreed that they could deliver additional tasters, offsite safety inductions, CSCS training and testing, mobile tower scaffolding abrasive wheels training for up to 36 extra candidates per year. Concern was expressed that whilst CTS were very successful in starting people on to taster courses etc they had not provided any information on outcomes from the project. A suggestion was made that further information should be requested from CTS and if Officers deemed that they could undertake the training and meet the outcomes targets underspend be re-allocated to them. If it was unlikely that they would meet the specified outcomes, further discussions could then be held in relation to a project which would further the issues raised in the Employment and Skills Action Plan. The point was made that construction skills were needed locally particularly bearing in mind the progress of the Outer Harbour.

**RESOLVED:**

That further information relating to the progress of CTS be circulated to Members.

## **9. MEMBERSHIP OF FORUM**

The Chairman suggested that a reciprocal arrangement be made with the Waveney Enterprise Partnership whereby a Member of each Group be co-opted to ensure that links were maintained. Whilst this was agreed in principle, the point was made that there was a need to ascertain if it would be worthwhile for a Member of the Great Yarmouth

Economic Forum to attend the Waveney Enterprise Partnership meetings. Reference was made to the fact that the Port Authority and Business Link had recently changed their functions and a query was raised as to whether it would still be beneficial to include them as full voting Members. A suggestion was made that the Business Support Alliance be asked how they could resource information locally before a decision on Business Link representation was made. Members noted that the Learning Community was now defunct and accordingly the Learning Forum would shortly be holding a workshop to discuss how to fill the gap this would create. Bearing in mind the high importance of the skills agenda to the Economic Forum, it was felt that the two Fora should be intrinsically linked. A suggestion was made that a representative of "College in the Community" should be invited to give a presentation at the next meeting to ascertain if it would be beneficial to ask them to join the Economic Forum. A query was raised as to whether Renewables East should be approached to join the Economic Forum bearing in mind the huge importance of renewables to Great Yarmouth. The point was made however that this Forum should be more of a strategic overarching Group and could not include all sectors of businesses.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That an invitation to join the Waveney Enterprise Partnership and a reciprocal arrangement be agreed in principle.
  
- (ii) That a representative from College in the Community be invited to the next meeting and further consideration be given by Officers as to whether the Port Authority/Port Company and Business Link should be full Members bearing in mind their recent changes in function.

## **10. GAPTON HALL TASK FORCE**

The Forum received the draft minutes of the last Task Force meeting held on 21 May 2007. It was noted that following pressure from the Task Force, the Highways Agency had brought forward the Traffic Surveys which would now be conducted over the Summer period. The main proposal from the Highways Agency was to fully signalise the roundabout but this was not likely to be put in place until 2009/10. It was hoped that an interim meeting would be held in July with a further meeting with the Highways Agency in September.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

## **11. NOMINATION FOR LEGI BOARD**

The Economic Development Officer reported that following Chris Hacon's resignation from the Primary Care Trust he was no longer a Member of the Economic Forum and therefore could not now be the Forum's representative on the LEGI Board. He added that a steer had been received from the National DCLG Committee during their recent visit that private sector representation on the Board would be preferable. Several suggestions of representatives were made, however, as they were not present it was agreed that an approach would be made to them which would be confirmed by e-mail.

RESOLVED:

That the Officers be requested to approach the suggested private sector representatives of the Forum to replace Chris Hacon on the LEGI Board and confirmation be sent to all Economic Forum Members once a nomination had been made.

## **12. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS ACTION PLAN**

The Forum received the latest version of the Action Plan. Members' attention was drawn to a number of questions which had been identified by the Sub-Group as key questions that needed to be resolved in order for the benefits of the EastPort and Outer Harbour Initiatives to be maximised for local people. The point was made that there was a need to find out what gaps there were within the skills provision available locally and to match supply and demand, ie through the Train to Gain Programme. A suggestion was made that the Sub-Group involve Connexions as it was felt their input was vital. Whilst it was acknowledged the Plan was focussed on 24 to 59 year olds, the point was made that there was a need to recognise that there would be gaps in provision but focus was needed in order to achieve the aims of the Plan. It was also pointed out that if focus was narrowed down even further there was a danger of duplication in provision.

RESOLVED:

That the latest Action Plan be noted.

### **13. LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE (LEGI)**

The Forum received the Programme Manager's report which gave details of current activities, 2006/07 outcomes and the first half (2007/08) targets.

### **14. UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS**

The unemployment statistics dated March 2007 were noted.

### **15. UPDATES ON MAJOR PROJECTS/SCHEMES**

The Forum received updates on major projects and schemes which included details of the latest events attended by GYMI and the fact that the A47 Alliance would shortly be launching a website to enable businesses to give details of their experiences of the A47. In relation to the URC, it was hoped that a summary of responses on the preferred options would be available within the next month or so. A suggestion was made that a representative from 1<sup>st</sup> East be invited to the next meeting to provide a progress report.

Members also received details of the IIC project which was linked to the Employment and Skills Action Plan. Reference was made to Shaping Norfolk's Future and it was noted that they wanted to re-focus themselves and look at governance in the early Autumn. The Group had commissioned an Activity Mapping Database which should go live in September and this would enable a gap analysis to be undertaken.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the updates provided on major projects and schemes be noted and a representative of 1<sup>st</sup> East be invited to attend the next meeting.

### **16. MINUTES FROM THE OTHER FORA**

The Forum received minutes of the Social Forum of 1 March, Learning Forum of 14 March and Environmental Forum of 6 March 2007.

**17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next scheduled meeting of the Economic Forum would be held on 13 September 2007 at 4.00 pm.

**18. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm.