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**GREAT YARMOUTH ECONOMIC FORUM**

**18 June 2008 – 4.00 pm**

**PRESENT:**

T Aydin (Community Connections), T Cable (Waveney Economic Partnership), R Perkins (Waveney Economic Partnership), I McCreadie (Town Centre Partnership), P Paine (BWCF), J Holt (Town Centre Partnership), M Potter (NWES), D Martin (Business Link), Councillor Collins (Norfolk County Council) and Councillor Plant (Great Yarmouth Borough Council).

T Howard, K Kittle, P Wright and C Webb (Great Yarmouth Borough Council Officials), T Leonard (LSP Officer) also attended.

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

In accordance with the Constitution, to confirm the appointment of the current Vice-Chairman, Councillor Graham Plant, as the Chairman of the Economic Forum for the 2008/2009 Municipal Year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To appoint Lawrence Brooks as the Vice-Chairman for the 2008/2009 Municipal Year.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from C Williams, J Steward, S Earl, H Fowle, M Gouldby, P Barry and P Cheeseman.

#### **4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2007 and the notes of the Inquorate Meeting held on 13 March 2008 were agreed.

#### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

#### **6. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (SCS) TARGETS**

Members had been asked to identify smart targets to achieve the economic development high level goals which were contained within the Executive Summary of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Peter Wright reported that it would be prudent to form a smaller Working Group to identify these smart targets. Ideally, the Working Group should consist of four or five members of the Forum who had an understanding of the subject matter.

Peter Wright requested that this item be deferred to the next meeting to enable any interested parties to contact him.

#### **7. REVIEW OF SUB-NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION**

Peter Wright informed the meeting that the deadline for comments was 20 June 2008.

A summary of the consultation questions contained within the Executive Summary was tabled at the meeting. Any further comments to be added to the Borough Council response should be e-mailed to Peter Wright within the next 48 hours.

David Martin reported that he had no views on the subject, whilst the results of the Boundary Commission were unknown and he felt that the document sat awkwardly at County level. He was also concerned that the learning and skills element had been omitted.

## 8. WORKING NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND

The Forum had been asked to consider themes for Working Neighbourhood Fund activity, which had been circulated at a previous meeting.

The Working Neighbourhood Fund had replaced the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund but with a different remit. Processes needed to be developed to deliver the programme which would be challenging, as the Fund did not specify specific outcomes. The Fund was aimed at the long term unemployment and areas of deprivation within the Borough, to relieve the level of unemployment and encourage enterprise.

The Employment and Skills Group, which fed into the LSP, would be asked to submit themes for this Fund, together with all the other LSP fora.

It was a requirement of this Forum to submit ideas with an economic theme. The Working Neighbourhood Fund was an area based grant and the funding would be received on a monthly basis from the DCLG, with no year-end financial restrictions, so the funding would be allowed to roll forward.

£7.1m of Working Neighbourhood Funding would be available over three years starting from the 1 April 2008. Some background research work had been carried out, resulting in some emerging themes; the low skills of workers, physical and mental illnesses, low aspirations, improving outcomes for young people, higher skilled job and enterprise.

The Chairman reported that he felt there was a fundamental difference between LEGI and worklessness. He felt that it was a large leap for unemployed people to be expected to bridge the gap between worklessness and self-employment.

Tim Leonard agreed with the Chairman but stated that deep-seated worklessness within the Borough must be addressed, especially those who claimed incapacity benefits. The Economic Forum must work in partnership with other agencies to address the issue on all fronts. He reported that the Primary Care Trust were keen to work in partnership, to address the issue of mental health and wellbeing of the unemployed sector in the Borough.

It was reported that the majority of the prime jobs in the Borough were not held by people who resided in the town. The majority of these workers lived in rural areas, Waveney or Norwich.

The Chairman reported that it was desirable to attract employers into the town who would be willing to employ the lesser skilled workforce, for example, factories or manufacturing light industry who could meet the demands of the local economy.

It would be prudent to prepare for the employment opportunities which would result from the Outer Harbour to ensure that the local workforce were trained and in a position to fill the vacancies as they arose.

Tim Leonard reported that he had spoken to the President of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce regarding volunteering, job training and work experience opportunities. The feedback gained was that if the Economic Forum could assist with the corresponding paperwork, Health and Safety implications and offer a level of financial assistance, these opportunities could be made more available.

## **9. ECONOMIC FORUM – THE WAY FORWARD**

The Forum was asked to consider the responses to The Way Forward paper which had been previously circulated and collated into a summary document which was tabled at the meeting.

The Head of Regeneration and Environment reported that four main improvement themes had been identified:-

- More streamlined working practices
- Proactive working
- Better productivity within the LSP Framework
- Become better connected and make stronger links with other organisations.

These themes could be used as the template for the review of the Economic Forum.

Tim Leonard proposed that the Economic Forum agenda should be decided at the previous meeting by the members to enable the Forum to take ownership.

A member informed the meeting that he felt that the Forum had become enmeshed in social issues which were not part of their remit. He reported that he felt that the Chairman of the Economic Forum should be elected from the Private Sector and not the Public Sector. The Chairman reported that he had no issues with this proposal. The previous Chairman had been from the Private Sector as per the constitution.

Peter Paine reported that we must be proactive and plan for the new employment opportunities that would become available following the completion of the Outer Harbour, Casino and Ferry Terminal by adopting a work plan based approach. The Forum should invite the companies who were involved in these major projects to attend a future meeting and give a presentation to raise awareness.

A member informed the meeting that the seven Key Shaping the Future Sectors, plus engineering, should form the basis of a regional approach to see where future employment opportunities would arise, for example, from the Energy Sector.

Ian McCreadie reported that the Forum should be meeting with equivalent groups in other authorities to benchmark our working arrangements.

It was reported that Waveney District Council had developed a document called the Waveney Prospectus, which detailed the vision of the authority, had been adopted by the LSP and championed by the local residents. This would manage and deliver specified outputs until 2011 but could be expanded to 2013/14 to take into account any government changes. It was noted that Great Yarmouth too had drafted a prospectus.

The Chairman proposed that the ideas which had been brainstormed at the meeting should be pulled together and discussed with the appropriate Officers and be worked up into a workable document to highlight the way forward.

The Head of Regeneration and Environment suggested that the Forum should meet before the next meeting, scheduled for 11 September 2008, so that momentum should not be lost, a date for a meeting in mid-July would be circulated.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) That a visit to Waveney District Council to discuss the Waveney Prospectus be considered

(ii) That a special meeting of the Forum be held during July 2008

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Economic Forum will be held in July 2008, at a time and date to be announced.

**10. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 5.55 pm.