

WEST SUFFOLK JOINT GROWTH STEERING GROUP

MONDAY 31 MARCH 2014

10.00 AM – 12.06 PM

Members Present

Forest Heath District Council

D W Bowman (Vice-Chairman)
C J Barker
R Dicker
R D S Hood

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Dr A S Pugh (Chairman)
P Chung
T Marks
D Redhead
Mrs A D Rushen
J Thorndyke

Also in attendance

I Gallin, Chief Executive
L Laycock, Growth Officer
A Mayley, Head of Economic Development and Growth
J Talbot, Principal Growth Officer
L Watts, Director
A Wilson, Director
S Wood, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
C Skoyles, SEBC Cabinet Officer/Committee Administrator

By Invitation

SEBC Councillor Mrs Sara Mildmay-White
Jonathan Cook, Director of SQW

Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

FHDC Councillors W J Bishop and T J Huggan were unable to attend the meeting.

Substitutes

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
010	<p><u>SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2014</u></p> <p>The schedule of recommendations from the meeting held on 20 January 2014 were received and noted.</p>	NOTED
011	<p><u>PRESENTATION FROM SQW ON THE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY INTO THE BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFER IN WEST SUFFOLK AND THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL INNOVATION/INCUBATION SUPPORT</u></p> <p>The Steering Group received and noted a presentation (attached) from Mr Jonathan Cook, Director of SQW. Commissioned consultants of both Councils, SQW had been tasked with undertaking a study into the business support offer in West Suffolk and the need for additional innovation/incubation support.</p> <p>Members noted the preliminary findings with interest, including the proposed actions relating to premises provision and non premises provision.</p> <p>A discussion was held on a range of issues arising from the presentation, which included:</p> <p>(a) The definitions of innovation and incubation, both of which had been described in the previously circulated Incubation and Innovation Theory and Practice paper (attached).</p> <p>(b) The degree of management support that could be provided to businesses and whether the Councils should focus activities around specific sectors.</p> <p>(c) Circumstances where 'virtual offers' (i.e. businesses that did not necessarily require physical space but needed a postal address) could be provided.</p> <p>(d) The justification for allocating public Council funding (which in turn helped to attract investment funding from Local Enterprise Partnerships and the European Union) to provide innovation/incubation centres. It was important to analyse what businesses wanted; growth may derive from joining up sectors for example, therefore a degree of flexibility in the Councils' focus was required.</p>	

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	<p>(e) Promotion of the equine industry by encouraging horse organisations to come to Newmarket. A joined up approach of how this would be undertaken would need to be addressed in respect of creating a balance against other growth, for example housing, as highlighted in the Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth.</p> <p>(f) Promotion of innovation/incubation in rural areas, which had been touched on in the theory paper.</p> <p>The report was commended for recognising the importance of being proactive and not reactive, and illustrating the benefits of West Suffolk for attracting new sustainable businesses and progressing existing specific sectors.</p> <p>Further work would be undertaken on the preliminary findings. Any additional comments Members may have could be submitted to the Economic Development and Growth Team for consideration by SQW and a more detailed report would be presented to a future meeting.</p> <p><i>(Jonathan Cook and both Directors left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)</i></p>	RESOLVED
012	<p><u>DISCUSSION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u></p> <p>The Steering Group received and noted a verbal report from the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services on the relationship between Planning and Economic Development.</p> <p>Members noted the following:</p> <p>(a) Key relationships not only existed between Planning and Economic Development but also with Housing colleagues as well.</p> <p>(b) Growth in West Suffolk was sensitive to planning issues and policies were developed across the services to complement each other. Economic activity was to be directed to the right areas so it was important that colleagues across the services worked in close harmony to achieve this.</p> <p>(c) Neither Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) nor St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) had fully adopted their new Local Plans and these were currently developing through the planning policy</p>	

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	<p>adoption process. Major growth projects were being agreed by both Councils and resources across the services would be deployed to support the delivery of identified projects and ambitions.</p> <p>(d) Adopted planning policies had significant powers to help generate growth, not only in those principal sectors presented by SQW in Minute 011 above, but also those not in the fore, such as the establishment of smaller, distinctive businesses in rural areas.</p> <p>(e) Developers/entrepreneurs often sought advice from the Planning Service in the first instance to ascertain whether a need had been identified for their potential development/business and to establish an appropriate location for such development in accordance with planning policy.</p> <p>(f) The Planning Service was being analysed to ascertain whether it was fit for purpose to support the Economic Development and Growth team in line with promoting Strategic Priority 1 '<i>Increased opportunities for economic growth</i>'. In addition, a coherent plan was also being developed with colleagues in the Housing service to help meet wider aspirations for West Suffolk.</p> <p>A discussion was held and the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services duly responded to questions raised. Members recognised the challenges of achieving a balance between delivering growth in accordance with planning policy, together with maintaining the health and wellbeing of people that lived in West Suffolk.</p>	NOTED
013	<p><u>INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLICATIONS UPON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u></p> <p>The Steering Group received and noted a presentation (attached) from the Head of Economic Development and Growth on the infrastructure implications upon economic development.</p> <p>Such infrastructure issues which affected economic development and growth in West Suffolk included:</p> <p>(a) Eastern Relief Road, Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds;</p> <p>(b) A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme;</p>	

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	<p>(c) A11 Fiveways to Thetford improvements; and</p> <p>(d) Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy, in particular the references to potential Cambridge to Newmarket improvements, and the impending study on the A1307 Haverhill to Cambridge corridor improvements.</p> <p>Members noted that the Highway Authority had expressed some concerns regarding the current improvement works to the A11 in connection with the Fiveways roundabout and junctions at Herringswell and Tuddenham.</p> <p>A discussion was held and the Head of Economic Development and Growth Services duly responded to questions raised. Topics included the proposed improvements to the A1307 and other potential transport links to Cambridge from Haverhill; improvements in collaborative working with Cambridge County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council; and acknowledging growth thresholds of rural villages in terms of accommodating those working in neighbouring towns in West Suffolk.</p>	NOTED
014	<p><u>DISCUSSION ON THE UNIQUE SELLING POINT (USP) OF THE WEST SUFFOLK AREA</u></p> <p>This item was discussed as part of the next item.</p>	
015	<p><u>PRODUCTION OF AN INWARD INVESTMENT PACK - UPDATE ON PROGRESS</u></p> <p>The Steering Group received and noted a presentation (attached) from the Growth Officer on the production of an inward investment pack.</p> <p>A discussion was held and the Growth Officer and Head of Economic Development and Growth Services duly responded to questions raised. Arising from the discussion, Members were asked to consider the Unique Selling Points (USPs) for West Suffolk so they could be analysed further for inclusion in the Pack. Initial USPs suggested at the meeting included:</p> <p>(a) Equine; (b) Advanced manufacturing; (c) Agriculture; and (d) High Technology/Agri-technology.</p>	

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	<p>Focus also needed to be given to ascertaining the reasons why people in their early thirties were choosing to live and work in West Suffolk and the conclusions made to be taken into account when producing the Pack.</p> <p>Consideration was also given to exploring business opportunities in Haverhill and the development of Superfast Broadband in rural areas.</p> <p>The Chairman asked that should Members have any further ideas for USPs, or any other comments, these be forwarded to Democratic Services for co-ordination with the Economic Development and Growth team.</p> <p><i>(The Chief Executive left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)</i></p>	RESOLVED
016	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>The following other items of business were discussed:</p> <p>(a) Members were reminded that the third and final Frontline Councillor Discussion Event, which was focussing on Economic Growth, would be held on Thursday 3 April 2014 at 5.00pm at Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club.</p> <p>(b) As requested, the Incubation and Innovation Theory and Practice paper (as referred to in Minute 011 above) and the three presentations would be provided to Members following the meeting.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>RESOLVED</p>
017	<p><u>CONSIDERATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>It had previously been agreed that meetings of the Steering Group would generally be held on a quarterly basis on Mondays at 10.00 am at venues rotated alternately between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p> <p>It was agreed that a future meeting date would be determined in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Steering Group in due course. A consultation response to the draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy was anticipated to be a future agenda item.</p>	RESOLVED