

Norwich Town Deals Board

27 April 2020 (via teleconf)

Attendees

Linn Clabburn, Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor
Phil Courtier, South Norfolk/Broadland District Council
Andrew Dernie, Aviva
Stephen Evans, Norwich City Council
Stefan Gurney, Norwich Business Improvement District
Julie Schofield, UEA
Jo Middleton, Norfolk County Council
Jan Feeney, Norfolk County Council
Graham Nelson, Norwich City Council
Chris Sargisson, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Chloe Smith MP
Sarah Steed, NUA
Ellen Tilney, Norwich City Council
Cllr Alan Waters, Norwich 2040 Vision
Mary Scales, Jobcentre Plus

Apologies

Clive Lewis MP
Helen Lewis, UEA
Shan Lloyd, Cities & Local Growth Unit
Minnie Moll, Jarrold
Vince Muspratt, Norfolk County Council
Nikki Rotsos, Norwich City Council
Chris Starkie, New Anglia LEP
Julia Nix, Jobcentre Plus
Cllr Mike Stonard

Notes of Meeting

1. Welcome, minutes and actions from previous meeting

Action	Lead
Minutes of Meeting 30 March 2020 - To be recirculated	Ellen Tilney
Capacity Funding spend updated monthly	Ellen Tilney
Chair to meet with council officers (via teleconf) before next Board Meeting – date/time TBC.	Ellen Tilney

2. Capacity Funding Spend

Noted.

3. Town Deal Work Packages Updates

Digital Hub – outline cost of building a digital hub on the site at the rear of City Hall have been produced on the basis of Norwich City Council providing the site (value estimated to be c. £1.5million) and using borrowing facilities. It is intended that Town Deal and other partner funding is used to bridge the viability gap in the business case which would not permit the

whole project to be funded via borrowing. Costs and timescales for a Design and Build competition for the building are being explored with RIBA. In addition a business case must be made to demonstrate a viable operational model for the building in Norwich. Ramidus have been commissioned to look at office demand in the short and medium term (taking into account the likely impact on the office market of COVID19) and also to look at suitable operational models for such a building. A copy of the Ramidus proposal is to be circulated to the Board.

Skills – initial meeting of all local providers of digital skills at the end of March was cancelled. It is essential to be clear about what we are proposing to create around digital skills provision through Town Deals. There is an across the board need for digital skills but it is important to avoid duplication with initiatives like City College’s Digitech Centre, UEA and NUA are already offering and to ensure that we are meeting the needs of employers, especially as we seek to restart the economy and assist those who have lost employment to rejoin the labour market. A meeting with all providers is to be convened shortly to gain consensus.

Branding – Norwich BID, Norwich City Council and Norfolk Chamber had previously submitted a funding application to New Anglia LEP which was not successful. However, this work is still valid and will form the basis of new proposals pivoted around COVID19 for a strategy to re-engage people with Norwich – Our Business, Our People, Our City. A web gateway will support businesses new to the city to integrate into local networks and the eight key business districts, a toolkit will provide support to businesses for staff recruitment and retention linked to the City of Stories branding and marketing the city as a destination for business location offering opportunity and high quality of life. Costings for the programme are available and a partnership approach will be taken to delivery which can be scaled according to the funding available from the Town Investment Plan.

Good Economy – The Good Economy Commission is chaired by the UEA and seeks to deliver against the Norwich 2040 Vision. In addition to the economic drag factors originally identified by the 2040 Vision Group the GEC will consider new factors arising as a result of COVID19 and the following economic shock by drawing on key sources of existing research and also commissioning new, locally focussed work. A key issue is what has COVID19 exposed within our local economy and labour market and what support is required to address this. The GEC Terms of Reference will be circulated to the Board for information.

East Norwich – this has been challenging to move forward due to various landowners’ concerns around scheme viability and their own financial security following the COVID19 outbreak. Arising from the vision produced by the city council a more detailed master plan is now required. Homes England are supporting this project and are very enthusiastic about the scale of opportunity presented by East Norwich. A similar project in York has been delivered but a visit has not yet been possible. A brief for the master plan is underway along with an outline governance structure for a public-private partnership approach including landowners, New Anglia LEP, Norfolk County Council alongside the City Council and an engagement strategy for neighbouring sites/areas.

Public Realm – an illustrated plan is being produced which will explain the benefits of improved public realm for the economy, health and wellbeing. It will provide a summary of the design and benefits of several public realm schemes and presents a five year investment programme. Two sites have been prioritised for potential Town Deals investment – Hay Hill and St Giles (from Grapes Hill footbridge down to Guildhall Hill). Design work has begun and a concept for both schemes will be available for the next Board meeting with a view to project costs being provided by June following feedback from the Board on the concept designs in May.

Revolving Fund – Work is being carried out to inform assumptions behind the proposed model which will form part of the Town Investment Plan. This will include identifying a notional

package of stalled/landbanked sites and their estimated market value, establishing likely CPO costs, potential percentage losses each time the fund “revolves”, timescales and how the sites may be packaged and re-sold into the developer market.

4. Proposal by Metro Dynamics

Several Board Members endorsed the proposals by Metro Dynamics having had experience of working with them and the quality of their work. Phil Courtier declared an interest (in knowing one of the researchers on a personal level) and did not take part in the discussion. The Board agreed to accept the proposal. Ellen Tilney and Graham Nelson to discuss their appointment.

5. Any Other Business

Stephen Evans updated the Board on the work being done by the Community Response Hub has taken in the region of 3000 calls, delivering food (300 grocery parcels), medicines (200 deliveries) and referrals to various community support organisations for those most vulnerable in Norwich. Business grants to the value of £27million and rates relief has so far been paid to around 2000 businesses with a further 400 businesses potentially eligible and needing to contact the City Council. Overall people are respecting the restrictions.

Chloe Smith commented that she was pleased with what she had heard so far about preparations for a Town Deal by Norwich. Overall people are looking for Norwich to secure the right attention and investment for a return to prosperity as soon as possible.

Chris Sargisson – the Chamber has been exceptionally busy and is currently putting together proposals for a business recovery programme to be led by the Chamber as we head towards a lifting of restrictions. Businesses will be supported to respond, restart and recuperate.

Stefan Gurney – Norwich BID has been engaged in local, regional and national efforts to develop a recovery framework for city centres. They will be supporting businesses with advice on restarting and operational safety for staff and customers. This will be about transformation, retention of businesses and attraction of new ones.

UEA are extremely busy with all current teaching provision being delivered online. They have also been supporting local manufacturing businesses who are involved in the PPE manufacturing effort including using their own facilities for 3D printing of visors.

NUA have been working with Hethel Innovation to deliver diversification workshops for the creative community. De-centralisation may be a significant opportunity for Norwich with many creative businesses realising that they do not need to base themselves in Shoreditch. Recovery efforts should target particular sectors who will be looking at other working options where our excellent quality of life offer may attract relocations.

Summary of Agreed Actions:

Action	Lead
New series of forward meeting dates to be arranged.	Ellen Tilney
Explore other teleconference options for May meeting, preferably to include visual.	Graham Nelson
Circulate Ramidus Office Study proposals for information	Ellen Tilney
Metro Dynamics to engage with Board at next meeting	Ellen Tilney

6. Future meeting dates:

Tuesday 26 May, 10-11.30am, (details TBC)