

**Norfolk e-Champions Group**  
**Notes of the meeting held on**  
**Wednesday 18th February 2004 at Pinebanks, Norwich**

**Present:**

Matthew Cross	Broadland District Council
Stephen Fennell	Broadland District Council
Cliff Grosvenor	Gt Yarmouth Borough Council
Mark Barrow	Gt Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Tony Smith	Gt Yarmouth Borough Council
Ray Harding	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
Cllr Bryan Bullivant	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
Andrew Mewes	NCP, Planning and Technical Project Manager
Ruth Kerry	NCP, Project QA
Supt Glyn Evans	Norfolk Constabulary
Tim Anderson	Norfolk County Council
Anne Tansley-Thomas	Norfolk County Council
Anna Graves	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Su Pointer	North Norfolk District Council
Graham Bull	North Norfolk District Council
Janet Norman-Philips	South Norfolk Council

**Observing:**

Tony Smith	Audit Commission
Mark Woodall	Audit Commission

Matthew welcomed e-champions (Members and Officers) and introductions followed

**ACTION**

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Tim Mobbs, Alan Tidmarsh, Colin Bland, Cllr Proctor (BDC), Cllr Turnbull (NCC)

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed

3. **Norfolk Connect Progress**

Andrew introduced the presentation on Project Progress and highlighted residual commitments. Andrew informed the group that 9 different work packages existed and highlighted their key milestones. Andrew briefed the group on project progress:

NORFOLK PORTAL

Andrew said that:

- The Norfolk Portal was now embedded on all authority websites (except Norwich City who were finalising a redesign of their site and would add the portal

thereafter). The search engine allowed a search across all sites or that of an individual authority.

- A programme of work to encourage other organisations to join the portal was being developed. Partners would maintain their own website and update the content.
- Work was taking place with the portal search mechanism to generate a joint A-Z list of services.
- Some other functionality exists through the Portal, particularly the ability to recommend links and the ability to receive statistics about use.

Responding to a query from Cllr Pointer, Tim said that it was each organisation's responsibility to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act in terms of website look and feel.

#### ELECTRONIC FORMS AND SECURE EMAIL/AREA

Andrew said that:

- A product had been selected to provide eforms/secure area solution (ebase) and this would provide authorities with the ability to design a form and map the look and feel of existing websites if required. Additionally the package provides a number of integration modules enabling connection to back end systems so that eg data can be extracted, forms can be printed (for signature), submitted by post and then scanned by the authority to be retained electronically. A work flow component also exists.
- Partners have submitted bids for hardware and training and installation dates were being scheduled.
- It was hoped that partners would continue to develop forms and work jointly with other partners after the conclusion of the project.

Andrew highlighted the priority areas for development under the project:

- Bereavement
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Street Lighting
- Land Charges

Matthew confirmed that the partnership had agreed to have these four areas up and running by end of March. He asked what arrangements were in place for development post March 04 as potential for improvement had been identified beyond the e-enablement and use of e-forms. He highlighted the potential for replication within authorities and how joint working might avoid duplication. The group agreed that this needed to be addressed and Mark highlighted the discussion at the previous meeting and said that this was an opportunity to work collectively and in partnership on a range of things.

Andrew said that approximately £40k had been allocated for a secure email pilot. Interest had been expressed from authorities and Andrew briefed the group on the work that would be involved.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Anne Tansley-Thomas highlighted consultation work and the ongoing work to reduce overload, avoid duplication and clashes, and develop an integrated consultation tool. Anne briefed the group on 'Consultation Finder' a package developed by Bristol City Council which had been identified as a good practice tool by eg the IDeA. Anne showed the group how this could be used and said that it was hoped the product would be procured this week with the aim of having some elements/partners up and running by the end of March. Anne thanked the partnership for the funding that had been allocated for the development of this work.

Anna sought clarity about how this linked with the Portal. Tim said that the search engine would identify either particular consultations or Consultation Finder in general. Responding to a query from Cllr Pointer, Anne said that the product wouldn't link to consultations in other parts of the country unless the links were added.

## E-DEMOCRACY

Ruth highlighted the further work that would take place through the Consultation Finder and e-Democracy projects. Responding to a query from Cllr Bullivant, Tim said that a locally produced database, linking across to the postcode database and parish boundaries, was being developed. Ruth said that this would assist, for example, the public in identifying local councillors for their area.

## INTERREG

Tim highlighted the work to develop shared best practice across country boundaries. Tim said that there were two specific e-government related projects that were part of this area of funding for Norfolk authorities: e-Voice and LOG-In.

E-Voice would look at increasing participation in democracy and LOG-In would work to achieve a single business database or at least joint views of business information, a regional best practice academy and the ability for the portal to do searches of databases on the internet.

## END REPORT and GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Ruth highlighted the general activities to manage projects and provide a final report. Ruth confirmed that there was no ODPM funding beyond March but that there was still an identified need for some central management/support. Partner responsibilities also existed and there would be a need to derive business benefit from investments.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

Contact Management System - Stephen queried whether the system being introduced by the County Council for use in the Council Information Centres and Customer Service Centre might be something that other authorities could buy in to. Anna agreed to ask the County Council's Project Manager to talk to group at a future meeting about the potential usage of the CMS.

Anna  
Agenda

#### 4. **Residual Commitments**

Ruth highlighted the residual commitments: those requiring central co-ordination and those identified as responsibilities for partners.

Budget - Ruth informed the group on how the £1,150,000 ODPM funding had been spent.

#### 5. **Norfolk Connect - Realising the benefits**

Matthew introduced the appended report which could form the basis of a substantive report to Norfolk Chief Executives.

Matthew reminded the group that the partnership money would run out at end of March. He confirmed that the partnership seemed to be on target with identified milestones and thanked the Project Team for the work. Matthew said that the issue now was to consider where the partnership goes from here. He reminded the group of the session with the Audit Commission about partnership working and noted the residual commitments that had been identified by Ruth. He suggested that there was a danger of losing the benefits that had been achieved to date and informed the group that the appended report identified this as main area to be considered. Further challenges had also been highlighted and it was suggested that partners should contribute a proportion of their IEG3 monies to maintain some element of the current project office to assist development of projects in the medium term.

Matthew tabled a diagram suggesting the future shape of Norfolk Connect and highlighted the opportunity for extending the concept of the partnership and the opportunity to join with other organisations.

During a wide ranging discussion about the future of the partnership and the role that the group should undertake, the following particular points were noted:

- the potential to consider wider service improvement for all authorities - Anna said that a group of HR officers were currently looking at workforce planning and this afforded a number of opportunities.
- the continual central government initiatives which often required joint responses and the need for a joint body who could address these.
- the need for authorities to make a financial commitment of £5k to retain elements of the project office
- the format of the group required for the future particularly if wider service delivery issues were to be addressed.
- the need for changes, at least in the way things were dealt with and focus of activities rather than personnel deployed.
- the need to consider the format of the project office

- the need to record the function of Norfolk Connect and its priorities
- the need for the group to be tasked with identifying medium and long term targets, (non technical) and particularly what the benefits for customers will be (ie at meeting post March 04) and to agree a programme of work for the next year or so.

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The group noted that Chief Executives had agreed to a half day away day to consider issues further but had asked for a mapping exercise to highlight what groups already existed and what their remit was. Noting Cllr Bullivant's concern about resourcing this work and whether it should be the responsibility of the e-Champions Group, Tim agreed to do some initial work, but to hold off doing anything else with it at this stage.

Tim

In considering future work, the group queried whether Members should be invited to the next meeting. Cllr Smith raised concern about the content of meetings when Elected Members were present and the need for greater clarity both in terms of language used (ie the need to avoid jargon) and what was required of Members/what their contribution should be/what actions and issues they needed to address. The importance of the group's work was accepted but the group noted that there was a need for Councillors to be able to sell the benefits of e-government/service improvement work to their wider communities.

Matthew accepted the points raised and the group agreed that it hadn't necessarily engaged with Members largely because it was focused on the implementation of an agreed programme. Ray confirmed that there was a need for officers to think through the difference between what the issues were for the group and what the group was asking of Members.

Cllr Bullivant confirmed that 44% of the population in his ward were over 60. He said that less than 2% were never away from computer. Therefore he said there was a need for the champions to consider how best to engage the others and sell the benefits of the work being carried out to e-enable some services and improve others. It was agreed that the next meeting to involve Elected Members should be based around benefits realisation ie what projects will deliver in terms of people, money, performance, and staff.

Agenda

## 6. **Any Other Business**

Tim asked the group to:

- submit invoices as soon as possible.
- submit nominations for the process mapping training
- let him have copies of their IEG III statements

All

All

All