

**Norfolk e-Champions Group**  
**Notes of a meeting held on**  
**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003 at Broadland District Council**

**Present:**

Cllr Gordon Bambridge	Breckland District Council
Mutairu Jibril	Breckland District Council
Steve Knights	Breckland District Council
Colin Bland	Broadland District Council
Matthew Cross	Broadland District Council
Cllr Andrew Proctor	Broadland District Council
Cliff Grosvenor	Gt Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Tony Smith	Gt Yarmouth Borough Council
David Tate	King's Lynn and WN Borough Council (Chair)
Tim Anderson	Norfolk County Council
Teresa Coldicott	Norfolk County Council
Alan Tidmarsh	Norfolk County Council
Graham Bull	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Bernard Crowe	North Norfolk District Council
Cllr Alistair Miller	South Norfolk Council
Janet Norman-Philips	South Norfolk Council

Nick Creagh – Broadland Consultant observing

David welcomed those present to the meeting and particularly Elected Members. Introductions took place.

**ACTION**

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mark Barrow, Anna Graves, Becky Hellard, Nick Nicholson, Tim Mobbs, Cllr Sue Pointer and Elected Members from the City, County and King's Lynn & West Norfolk Councils.

2. **Norfolk Connect Partnership 2003-4 Funding and Projects**

Tim explained the history of the Norfolk Connect Partnership and how it had worked to obtain central government funding. As the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had now agreed joint projects it would fund (Portal, e-forms, FAQ/A-Z, databases, secure email, e-democracy) Tim said that these could now be developed with the aim of adding value and improving customer services. Potential improvements were detailed and Tim highlighted other projects which were being pursued (eg SUPER, STAR and e-Sign) and how these were being funded eg through European monies. Joint training and standards were also being developed by the partnership.

Tim said that if further information was required this could be provided.

Tim

David said that the group also acted as a co-ordinating body and that authorities could participate in various elements as preferred.

Cllr Proctor asked whether, for example, licensing issues had been considered under projects like e-forms where significant improvements could be made. Tim said that a consultancy were being brought in to develop the projects and the Portal project were considering technology that could be employed. Once this work had taken place Tim said that issues like these could be considered further.

There was strong member support for using our ODPM money to move forward an issue like this.

It was agreed that:

- David should alert the Norfolk wide group dealing with this to this possibility.
- The group should speak with their own representatives on this group.
- Tim would ask the portal group/Sopra to look at this.

David  
All  
Tim

### 3. **Norfolk Portal update**

Teresa, for the Norfolk Portal Project Board, introduced the appended report. Teresa said that an evaluation team had worked through the procurement process and it was hoped that a contract with a supplier could be entered into by end of July.

Confirming the background to the project, Teresa said that the core partners: the County and seven district councils in Norfolk all wanted to work together to enable the public and staff to find relevant information no matter who provided the service. Other partners could be brought on board at a later date. Teresa said that contributors would 'own' their information but effectively the portal brought a common search facility to assist in finding relevant data through authorities' web-sites.

Colin said that government funding had been obtained. Therefore this one-off funding could provide a 3-5 year service which overcame particular issues around revenue funding in the short term.

### 4. **Partnership Agreement**

Tim confirmed that the item had been brought to alert those present to current issues for the partnership.

Tim said that the County Council had been acting as partnership lead and 'banker' but that Districts may want to lead on some elements. There also needed to be a process to cover how revenue funding would be dealt with. Therefore a partnership agreement could be an appropriate way to manage these issues. Something similar had been developed for a regional project which might be a useful model. The portal agreement would be signed as an interim measure and during the following months additional thoughts could be considered with the aim of bringing something to the August meeting.

Tim/Jackie

David said that it was essential for the group to take this on board. Colin suggested the need for this to be dealt with on a two-tier basis. Firstly for the partnership itself to allow for flexibility, secondly on individual projects the need for something stronger. Alan registered concern about what happens when central government funding runs out, the associated revenue consequences and how legal agreements could be developed to cover this. Cllr Smith highlighted the risk elements and the need for trust and confidence. Cllr Proctor highlighted the positive work by the partnership but registered the commitment required and the need to report back to individual councils so that this could be understood. This particularly included the need to understand the costs/benefits and the difficulty in producing accurate figures which would be representative in subsequent years.

Alan highlighted the need for robust clarity on individual projects but also the need to recognise where we were going. Commitment was being made with the expectation that change, in service delivery, would be made and that this was

the basis on which medium term commitments were being made. Alan suggested that authorities would be working together more in the future and that therefore issues should be addressed.

## 5. **Revenues Partnership**

David introduced Steve Knights who informed the group about work that Breckland had carried out with Forest Heath. Steve tabled the submission that accompanied the bid to the ODPM in 2002 and detailed the background that led to the formation of the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

Steve said that both Breckland and Forest Heath had been looking to work in partnership to deliver some services to provide improvements for customers, promote electronic service delivery and achieve cost advantages for both authorities. Significant benefits had already been achieved through the partnership and further improvement was expected.

Steve said that the key to the effectiveness of the partnership was the standardisation of IT and this had been achieved through a procurement exercise. Steve said that a single server provided a service to two sites which would be incorporated in the future. Service Level Agreements had been entered into to deliver the initiatives identified by the partnership. External legal consultants had provided advice about managing the partnership and a joint committee approach had been established to take issues forward. This would become the decision making body from 1st August 2003. Steve said that a number of other practical initiatives had been adopted.

Steve detailed the ODPM funded projects being developed by the partnership. Future developments were highlighted including the potential for additional partners on either a full, contractual or ICT basis.

Responding to a query from Cllr Smith, Steve highlighted the difficulties in partnership working and the assistance received to develop the initiatives. The potential scrutiny and auditing issues were discussed. Janet raised the likely increased future joint working and Colin suggested the benefits in holding a joint seminar on partnership working to look separately at the issues raised. Tim suggested that someone from the Strategic Partnership Taskforce be invited to participate.

Broadland/  
Tim

## 6. **Council Information Centre and Joint Staff Training**

Tim said that four information centres had been up and running for some time. A series of recommendations had now been made for future service delivery and a way forward had been agreed ie developing existing centres, adding new centres and ascertaining other methods of supporting service delivery. A joint training scheme had been introduced to enhance team working and support those involved.

Colin highlighted the joint working involved through providing, for example, the proposed joint information centre at the Millennium Library. Colin also highlighted Broadland's use of the mobile information centre and the potential for joint working.

## 7. **Broadband**

Tim explained progress to achieve greater Broadband access and highlighted the number of bids that were being considered.

Tim said that following a final assessment process a decision would be announced about projects that could be taken forward.

Norfolk work on Broadband was also progressing and work had been undertaken to establish demand. Results would be passed, in the next fortnight, to consultants who would present information in the form of a business plan. Tim highlighted likely required connectivity and the need for potential suppliers to consider this.

8. **NCCs Partnership Benefits Summary**

For information, Tim explained the internal process at Norfolk County Council to deliver the authority's e-Government programme. He said that a balanced scorecard tool had been adopted (example appended) which used an FBI approach to outline the features of a project and highlight potential benefits.

Tim welcomed comments on the Partnership Benefits Summary.

9. **Any other business**

Tim reminded the group that more details would be available shortly about event scheduled for July 17th.

10. **Dates of future meetings**

Were noted as

16 July 03 9.30am **NB venue Norwich tbc - afternote now Broadland**  
20 Aug 03 10am **King's Lynn** plus lunch  
thereafter the third Wednesday of each month as follows:  
17 Sept 03 9.30am Godfrey Room, Broadland District Council **afternote**  
**now Prince of Wales Road, Norwich**  
15 Oct 03 9.30am Godfrey Room, Broadland District Council  
19 Nov 03 9.30am Godfrey Room, Broadland District Council  
17 Dec 03 9.30am Godfrey Room, Broadland District Council

David said that the next meeting was scheduled for 16th July and that Nick Nicholson had offered to host this meeting in Prince of Wales Road, Norwich.

Nick

It was agreed to accept the invitation and also to welcome Steve Holland to the meeting to discuss SUPER.

Janet said that someone from the regional government funded body set up to encourage Broadband was keen to make a presentation to the group.

Janet/  
Jackie

It was agreed to accept the offer and Janet agreed to provide Jackie with the details.