

4. Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council – leadership across boundaries to deliver regional infrastructure

Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council showed strong leadership and joint working to effectively deliver major infrastructure across local authority boundaries.

Norwich International Airport (NIA) has both local and regional significance on a site straddling Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council. When a large commercial, aviation-related development on its northern apron was proposed it was important that both councils worked with the developer to provide seamless consideration.

The two councils agreed that they would work together in order to ensure a consistent approach on negotiations, timescales, decisions and planning conditions. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was drafted which agreed to:

- provide a single point of contact for NIA and its agents
- send out a single, joint consultation letter from both authorities
- seek to prepare a single agreed committee report
- identify a 'lead' authority to be responsible for the administration of the application.

To help deliver a single, dedicated point of contact a planning consultant was appointed who worked alongside a joint team of senior planning officers. Requests for further information, negotiations and application timescales were agreed with the agent through the planning consultant, who met regularly with the officer teams.

When it came to determine the application a single meeting was arranged with one presentation from officers made to the respective planning committees for each authority: effectively simultaneous but parallel committee processes.

This avoided any inconsistency in the information presented and allowed for each to fully understand all the cross authority concerns. Both committees resolved to approve the application and the two decision notices were issued shortly afterwards with no material variation between them.

The willingness of Broadland DC and Norwich CC to work closely together, both at officer and political level, to streamline process and reduce uncertainty, avoided unnecessary duplication, inconsistency, confusion and delay.

“The two councils had already been working together for some years, with other authorities in the area, to create a Joint Core Strategy. The experience of working through all the challenges involved has been extremely positive resulting in a sound plan created jointly for the greater good of greater Norwich. The Aeropark is just one example of how we can work flexibly together to deliver major consents quickly.”

Cllr Shaun Vincent, Broadland's Portfolio Holder for Planning

“The development of Norwich Aeropark is highly significant for the wider Norwich economy. It has the potential to deliver significant numbers of high skill and high added value jobs providing sustainable and rewarding training and employment opportunity for local people. It will also support the delivery of wider growth plans and stimulate further development in the area.”

Cllr Mike Stonard Portfolio Holder for Environment, development and transport, Norwich City Council