

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on
Tuesday, 1 October 2013 at 5.30pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court,
Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT: Councillor N J Daubney (Chairman)
Councillors A Beales, Lord Howard, A Lawrence, B Long,
Mrs E Nockolds and D Pope and Mrs V M Spikings.

CAB71: **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 September 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB72: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

CAB73: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

CAB74: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

CAB75: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present.

CAB76: **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

CAB77: **FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

The forward decision list was noted.

CAB78: **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i) **Resources and Performance Panel – Audit Committee : 24
September 2013**

The Panel made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were dealt with when Cabinet considered the reports on the agenda:

RP54: Cabinet Report: Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15

RESOLVED: (1) That the Council Tax Support scheme as approved January 2013 be approved for consultation purposes for 2014/15 over a 6 week period ending 12 November 2013 (subject to paragraph 1.2 being amended as set out above).

(2) That a further report be presented to Cabinet for consideration on 3 December 2013.

RP55: Cabinet Report: Business Rates Pooling Arrangement

RESOLVED: (1) Cabinet recommends to Council that in principle and subject to the negotiation of the detailed financial and governance arrangements, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk agrees to join a business rates pool with Norfolk County Council and other Norfolk district councils.

(2) Subject to their approval of the detailed pooling and governance arrangements the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to enter the Borough Council into a business rates pooling arrangement for Norfolk.

ii) Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel – 30 September 2013

The Panel made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were dealt with when Cabinet considered the reports on the agenda:

REC64: Cabinet Report – King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) establish a King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee for the unparished area of King's Lynn.
- (2) establish the Committee for a trial period until 1st May 2015.
- (3) the Committee to meet on a quarterly basis.
- (4) adopt the draft terms of reference attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee.

CAB79: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Councillor Daubney presented a report which explained that the Local Council Tax Support schemes were introduced from 1 April 2013. The national scheme of Council Tax Benefit was abolished and central

government devolved responsibility to local authorities to design schemes to help residents on low incomes with their council tax costs. The funding for these schemes was also devolved and cut by 10 per cent.

A draft Council Tax Support scheme falling within the reduced funding level was drawn up and, on 21 August 2012, agreed by Members as the draft scheme to be published for consultation. During the consultation period central government announced a transitional grant for Council Tax Support schemes containing minimal or no cuts to the level of help. On 4 December 2012 Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council to accept the grant, adopt the old scheme of Council Tax Benefit as the 2013/2014 Council Tax Support scheme and adopt the draft scheme taken to consultation as the 2014/2015 Council Tax Support scheme, subject to those in receipt of Carer's Allowance being added as a protected group.

Cabinet was reminded that each financial year a billing authority must review its Council Tax Support scheme and, by 31 January, adopt their scheme for the forthcoming financial year. The report proposed that the Council adopt the draft Council Tax Support scheme, approved on 4 December 2012, as the Council Tax Support scheme for 2014/2015.

In response to a question from Councillor Beales, The Revenues and Benefits Manager explained that it was not proposed to use the technical changes funding to make up the Council's shortfall and that the County Council had indicated that it required any scheme to fall within the reduced funding levels.

Councillor Daubney in moving the recommendations, commented that the Council had tried to approach this in a helpful and responsible manner.

The Resources and Performance Panel had considered the report and supported its recommendations.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Council Tax Support scheme as approved January 2013 be approved for consultation purposes for 2014/15 over a 6 week period ending 12 November 2013.

2) That a further report be presented to Cabinet for consideration on 3 December 2013

CAB80: **BUSINESS RATES POOLING**

The Chief Executive presented a report which explained that the Government had recently issued a prospectus for business rates pools for 2014-15, with a requirement for notification of new pools by 31 October 2013. Although pools were designated in the autumn, final decisions could be made after the local government finance settlement.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was keen for local authorities to join pooling arrangements for business rates as it believed that it would “encourage” joint working on economic growth and service delivery.

The report explained that in two tier areas such as Norfolk the upper tier authority, (NCC), would normally receive a top up from government and the district authorities would normally pay a tariff (levy) to government. The levy rate for any increase in business rates growth over and above the baseline funding level, adjusted for inflation for all Norfolk District authorities is 50%. The effect of pooling would be that the levy rate would be reduced or eliminated completely. It was noted that there were also financial risks associated with pooling. Some local authorities may find that a reduction in their local business rates income which would have qualified for a safety net payment (where business rates income falls by more than 7 ½% below the baseline funding position) if they are part of a pool, would no longer qualify where the overall pool is above its combined safety net threshold.

Discussion with DCLG had confirmed that pools could be created with considerable flexibility within the locally agreed governance arrangements. Therefore, it was possible for a council to be an associate member of a pool where it made sense in relation to economic strategy, but not part of the designated pool where it did not make financial sense to do so. In a situation where an individual district was predicting that it would have no business rates growth, and particularly if it expected to breach its safety net levels as Great Yarmouth did this year, then the Norfolk councils as a whole would financially benefit if that council stayed outside the pool and accessed safety net payments direct from DCLG.

The report explained that in overall terms there would appear to potentially be considerable financial benefits to Norfolk authorities, including the Borough Council, from the creation of an extended business rates pooling arrangement for 2014/15.

Although the details had yet to be agreed, the model endorsed by the Norfolk Leaders was that the arrangement was established whereby the business rates were pooled for the purpose of the Government calculation of tariffs, top up and levy payments but in practice only the sum “saved” in levy payments was actually pooled for joint decision making, as was the arrangement for most of the existing business rates Pools.

In supporting the proposals, Councillor Beales commented that it was funding that the Councils would not otherwise have access to. He asked how flexible access to the pooling arrangement would be if for example Great Yarmouth’s situation improved and they wished to join the pool. It was explained that currently it was possible to close down one pool and start up another. Councillor Beales also asked how it

was anticipated a safety net within the Pool would work, to which the Chief Executive explained that this element was one still up for decision.

The Resources and Performance Panel had considered the report and supported its recommendations.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That Council agree that in principle and subject to the negotiation of the detailed financial and governance arrangements, the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk agrees to join a business rates pool with Norfolk County Council and other Norfolk district councils.

2) That subject to the approval of the detailed pooling and governance arrangements the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to enter the Borough Council into a business rates pooling arrangement for Norfolk.

CAB81: **KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Lord Howard presented a report which responded to two Notices of Motion, 4/11 proposed by former Cllr Ian Mack and 9/11 proposed by Cllr David Collis both of which related to the representational arrangements for King's Lynn.

The report explained that Cabinet had established the King's Lynn Representational Task Group chaired by Cllr Lord Howard in June 2012. The Task Group met on four occasions and instigated a workshop involving all King's Lynn Ward Members. The report summarised the work of the Task Group and presented its recommendations to Cabinet in the form of a King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee to be established, comprising the Ward Members for King's Lynn, for a trial period to May 2015, and to meet quarterly.

Councillor Daubney thanked the Group for their consideration and looked forward to the operation of the Committee.

The Regeneration Environment and Community Panel had considered the report and supported its recommendations.

RECOMMENDED 1) That a King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee be established for the unparished area of King's Lynn;
 2) That the Committee be established for a trial period until 1st May 2015;
 3) That the Committee meet on a quarterly basis; and
 4) That the draft terms of reference attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved for the Committee.

CAB82: TENDER FOR EXTERNAL PRINTING SERVICES

Cabinet considered a report which explained that the Council's current Print Framework Agreement, established in 2009, expired on 30 September 2013. A tender had been conducted under EU procurement regulations to create a new Framework Agreement which would run for the next 4 years.

An updated list with the successful tenderers had been submitted to Cabinet following the evaluation of those tenders received.

RESOLVED: That the signing and sealing of framework agreements with a number of printers that will be party to the new arrangement be approved.

The Meeting closed at 5.56 pm