

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the above Panel held on
Wednesday 28 November at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite,
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillor C Sampson (Chairman),
Miss L Allen, M Back, R Bird, A Bubb, M Chenery of Horsbrugh,
Mrs J Collingham, P Foster, M Howland, M Pitcher,
L Scott, Mrs E Watson, D Whitby and A White

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor A Lawrence – Portfolio Holder for Community

Councillor Mrs V M Spikings – Portfolio Holder for Development

Officers:

Ray Harding - Chief Executive
Andy Piper - Executive Director for Environmental Health & Housing
Ostap Paparega - Regeneration & Economic Development Manager
Alan Gomm - LDF Manager
Vicki Hopps - Environmental Health Manager (Commercial)

Apologies for absence: Councillor M Shorting

REC90: **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs E Watson be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

REC91: **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

REC92: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

REC93: **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was no urgent business.

REC94: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor John Loveless attended under Standing Order 34 in respect of Item 10 – Derelict Land and Buildings Group Update.

REC95: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

REC96: **MATTERS REFERRED TO THE PANEL FROM OTHER COUNCIL BODIES AND RESPONSES MADE TO PREVIOUS PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS/REQUESTS**

The Panel noted the response made by Cabinet at its meeting on 30 October 2012 to the recommendations made by the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel at its meeting held on 24 October 2012 in respect of the following item:

- Museum Square Project
- Black Sack Waste Recycling Contract
- Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles
- Proposals for a Large Scale Housing Development on some of the Council's Land Holdings

REC97: **RESIDENTIAL AND HOLIDAY CARAVAN SITE LICENSING**

The Panel was advised that the Council (through the Environmental Health and Housing Department) was responsible for the licensing and regulation of caravan sites within the Borough. The Housing Standards section license residential sites and the Licensing Team holiday sites. Operational procedures and revised site licence conditions were recommended for adoption by the Council. The proposed procedures and conditions reflected new statutory government guidance and looked to bring the Council's practices in line with current government policy.

The report detailed the following:

- Licensing Caravan sites;
- Residential sites;
- Holiday sites;
- Gypsies and Travellers;
- Consultation; and
- Adoption of New Standards

In terms of consultation, it was explained that the report and associated appendices went out for consultation with the following bodies:

- The British Holiday & Park Home Association;
- National Park Homes Council;
- Independent Park Homes Advisory Service;
- National Caravan Council;
- Park Homes Residents Action Alliance

The Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service were also consulted.

The feedback from this consultation process had been incorporated into the report and amendments made where appropriate.

The Panel then made the following comments:

Councillor White asked if the Council had had any problems with caravan sites in the past. The Executive Director for Environmental Health & Housing explained that problems had occurred in the past, although the majority of both holiday and residential sites were well-managed. He made reference to the Hardwick Road caravan site which had not been well run or managed and explained that the Council had also been involved in two other sites.

The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) explained that the conditions were not new and the Council already had standards in place, this was an opportunity to review and update them.

Councillor Bird referred to page 10, point 11 – Revocation of a Site Licence and asked how someone could be stopped from having a limited company, dissolving the company, and then starting another one under another name and what safe guards were in place to prevent this happening? The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) stated that she would look into this further and come back to the Panel with a response.

Councillor Bird also referred to page 16 (ii) – Risk of flooding and expressed concern all that existed was PEN advice. The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) explained that people on the register were contacted by text. In addition, if it was a holiday site the site owner should make occupants aware of the rules and evacuation procedures. In response to a request from Councillor Bird, the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) agreed to see if it could be more formalised.

Councillor Bird also referred to the register of who was on/off the site and asked how that would be policed. The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) explained that the site owner was expected to keep the register and would be able to provide evidence that a person was not living on the site. The register must be available to officers on request on the site. It was further explained that the officers were working with some larger sites to make sure that the holiday sites were being used as holiday sites and not residential.

Councillor Bird congratulated Brian Isted on the production of a good document and considered that this was a step in the right direction.

Councillor Mrs Collingham asked whether there was a more succinct way of presenting the report as she had found it confusing to follow. The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) agreed to look at the format of the report for future reporting.

RECOMMENDED: That the Panel approved the site licence conditions for residential and holiday caravan sites.

REC98: **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

REC99: **DERELICT LAND AND BUILDINGS GROUP UPDATE**

The Panel was informed that bringing derelict buildings and land back into use was a key council priority, as detailed in the Corporate Business Plan 2011-2015. The report offered an update on progress against the current Action Plan, in addition to an update on the Townscape Heritage Initiative application.

Councillor Loveless addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He stated that he was pleased to receive the update but expressed concern that the update report was not current. He asked that in future the report be updated.

In response to comments raised by Councillor Loveless, the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager explained what an enforced sales procedure was. He also acknowledged that the list needed to be tidied and explained that Parish Councils were involved in helping to monitor buildings in their parish.

Councillor Loveless also stated that this was an important priority for the Council and he would like the Panel to ask for further funding to carry out more work on this project, particularly officer time. He added that it would be of benefit if the Council could be pro-active in this area.

The Regeneration & Economic Development Manager advised that the Cabinet had approved £500,000 as match funding towards a Heritage Lottery Fund bid, which if successful, would bring in £1.5m of grant funding. That was also an example of how council resources could be used to bring in external funding (public or private).

Councillor Bubb stated that a lot of the buildings on the list were on key through routes, and he considered that these should be given priority.

The Regeneration & Economic Development Manager responded to questions raised relating to specific sites. In response to a question from Councillor Bird, the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager agreed to arrange a meeting with him as soon as possible.

The Chief Executive commented that the Panel had made a number of good points however he raised caution about the level of resources needed to be applied to this. He added that this was not a statutory function for the Council to provide. He therefore asked the Panel to allow those buildings where action could not be taken to be taken off

the list and to allow the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager to further prioritise the list.

The Chairman then asked the Panel to report back to the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager any buildings which could be removed from the list and any which they considered needed to be a priority.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager and his team for the update.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the report and to continue to be monitored on a 6 monthly basis.

REC100: **KING'S LYNN ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION CENTRE (KLIC)**

The Panel considered a report which set out the Heads of Terms, the key elements and funding structure of a partnership agreement to build an enterprise and innovation centre in King's Lynn.

In response to questions from the Panel it was explained that the enterprise centre would create 25,000 sq ft flexible office space for between 30-50 businesses. It would also have a conference facility for 100 plus people using the latest technology.

Councillor Mrs Collingham suggested that the word cumulative should be added to the end of item 9 on page 82.

Councillor Mrs Watson asked whether there would be any long term contracts to stabilise the centre in addition to the short term contracts. In response the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that it was hoped to have an anchor tenant to start with.

The Chief Executive added that it was all about balance and whilst the centre needed stability the aim was for businesses to grow and then move on to other premises. He explained that a centre had been set up in Littleport which had worked well and this was a tried and tested model.

The Chairman added that part of the challenge would also be to have suitable premises to move to.

RECOMMENDED: That the Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet as set out the report

- RETURN TO OPEN SESSION -

REC101: **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY – EARLY STAGE CONSULTATION ON METHODOLOGY FOR VIABILITY ASSESSMENT**

The LDF Manager presented the report which explained that Officers were engaged in the collection of the background material necessary for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Consultants were preparing a viability assessment to inform Members of future decisions on the level of CIL charges. There was a need to undertake consultation with interested parties as part of the viability work to inform the process.

The LDF Manager explained that the Government had decided that a tariff based charge on new development known as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provided the best framework to fund new infrastructure required to support growth. From April 2014 the Council's ability to pool S106 agreements towards the provision of infrastructure would be effectively removed leaving CIL as the appropriate mechanism if the Council was to help support the infrastructure needed of development in West Norfolk.

As part of introducing CIL, the Council must identify the scale of infrastructure needed to support growth and then set a rate that would seek to raise a contribution whilst striking an appropriate balance between the desirability of funding infrastructure and the potential effects of the imposition of the levy upon the economic viability of development across the area. This draft schedule would be subject to an extensive process of public consultation and to a public inquiry at which an Inspector would consider if the charges set were reasonable and based upon sound evidence of viability.

Cabinet agreed in October 2011 that the Council should work to prepare a draft CIL charging schedule setting out the type of development for which CIL would be sought and the rates that would apply. The first stage of that work was to prepare a viability assessment as to what levels of CIL could be afforded by development in the Borough.

It was reported that a specialist consultant had been appointed by the Council to prepare a viability assessment, and work was currently continuing on this. There was a very strong emphasis on working with the development industry and other interested parties to ensure that the appropriate economic data was being used as the basis for CIL. As part of the process it was necessary to establish a robust methodology to be used. Experience from other authorities ahead of the Council in the process showed the value of careful consultation at the early stage.

The consultant had now reached a stage where he needed to test certain assumptions and outline the methodology used in order to finalise a viability assessment report. This report recommended that Cabinet agreed to the consultation exercise being undertaken and the results fed into a finalised viability assessment. There would then be an opportunity for Cabinet to consider the outputs and outline a set of CIL rates for the first stage of wider consultation.

At the same time as considerations of viability were being addressed the Council was preparing an update of its infrastructure study. This was the list of items required to support growth of the Borough over the next 15 years. CIL Regulations stipulated that the amount needed to provide the infrastructure must exceed the amount likely to be raised by CIL charges.

Although much of the evidence that would go into drawing up the CIL would be of a technical nature, based upon an assessment of both need and viability, there would be a clear need for a political judgement on how the balance between growth and investment was to be struck.

Councillor White asked how the CIL would affect conversions? In response it was explained that it would be based on new floor space coming forward.

RESOLVED: That the Panel supports the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That Cabinet:

- 1 Agrees to a consultation exercise being carried out in connection with the preparation of a Viability Assessment by our consultant as part of the preparation of a draft CIL Charging Schedule.
2. Notes that the results of the consultation will be reported back to Cabinet before proceeding to the next stage in the process.

REC102: **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME & CABINET FORWARD DECISION LIST**

The Panel considered its Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Decisions List as it related to Regeneration, Environment and the Community.

RESOLVED: That the Panel's Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Decision list be noted.

REC103: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel was scheduled to take place on **Thursday 3rd January 2013** at **6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court.**

The meeting closed at 7.27 pm