

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee  
held on Monday 25 January 2010 at 6.00pm  
in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors I Mack (Vice-Chairman in the Chair),  
P Burall, D Collis (substitute for I Gourlay) C Crofts,  
D Pope, C Sampson and A Tyler

Other Members Present:

Councillor N Daubney, Leader  
Councillor R Johnston, Portfolio Holder for Performance  
Councillor J Law, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration  
Councillor Mrs E Nockolds, Portfolio Holder for Sports, Arts and Open Spaces  
Councillor A Beales, Portfolio Holder for Community

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Gourlay, R Payn,  
J M Tilbury and A White

**CSC41: APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Tyler be appointed Vice-Chairman for the Meeting.

**CSC42: MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CSC43: URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

**CSC44: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

**CSC45: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

**CSC46: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

CSC47: **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There was none.

CSC48: **MATTERS CALLED-IN PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12**

There was none.

CSC49: **CAPITAL PROGRAMME – A DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The Chairman highlighted that the report to Cabinet outlined the direction of travel for regeneration in the Borough for the next ten years, including the timelines, funding and resources implications. The Regeneration and Environment Panel had been unable to consider the report due to cancellation of their meeting on 6 January 2010.

In response to a questions relating to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Single Conversation, the Finance and Resources Manager advised that regular meetings were held with the HCA and it was expected that Single Conversation would be completed by the end of February. This would identify schemes which were considered to be worthy of funding and the HCA would offer funding for the bids which they could support. It was noted that £1Million had already been confirmed, in principle, for the housing development at NORA, subject to contract, and it was hoped that further good news would be received by the end of March. The Finance and Resources Manager emphasised that before schemes could be progressed, the funding had to be confirmed as available and the schemes proven to be affordable. A report on each scheme would be presented to Cabinet recommending how the scheme would be funded and the risks involved. Nothing would be taken forward which could not be afforded. With regard to the percentage reduction in affordable housing level, it was confirmed that the HCA were aware of the Council's decision and recognised this as an appropriate response to current economic circumstances.

A question was asked about the impact of the recession and whether the justification for town centre expansion was still there, in light of forecasts relating to shopping patterns and increase in web-based shopping. The Finance and Resources Manager advised that the situation would be kept under review, however the footfall figures for King's Lynn continued to be positive.

With regard to the Fisher Fleet modernisation, it was confirmed that nothing was included in this programme or the overall Capital Programme. It would be necessary to secure additional external funding before this project could be considered.

In response to a question about Hillington Square, the Chief Executive advised that the Council continued to work with Freebridge Community

Housing (FCH) to come up with an improvement scheme for Hillington Square. He emphasised that any bid for external funding would be made by FCH, supported by the Council.

Reference was made to plans for multi storey car parking. The Finance and Resources Manager explained that the need for a review of car parking had been identified through the work being undertaken in conjunction with Norfolk County Council on the King's Lynn Area Transport Strategy (KLATS). This would involve the production of a new Car Parking Strategy had been identified, which could include consideration of additional multi storey car parks as well as Park and Ride schemes. Any proposals would require Cabinet and Council approval. He advised that the King's Lynn Car Parking Strategy document would come forward in the next few months, which would consider options for effective traffic management systems. The traffic model developed through KLATS would be used to assess the impact of proposals. There would be consultation and an opportunity for more detailed consideration of the proposals by Members.

With regard to the timing of the provision of a swimming pool on the Lynnsport site, it was explained that the programme which was presented was considered to be sustainable. A large amount of funding would be required to deliver the scheme. In the meantime, the service could continue to be delivered by the St James Pool.

Concern was expressed with regard to the compulsory purchase of the Grain Silo Site, that the return on the investment would not be seen for many years. It was explained that it was anticipated that the compulsory purchase could be completed in conjunction with a back to back sale and that discussions in this respect were progressing. However, the proposal which had been included allowed the Council a fall back position to take over the site if necessary. The situation would be kept under review.

CSC50: **BUDGET 2009/2010 - MONITORING**

The Chairman introduced the report which provided a summary of the overall effect of monitoring which had taken place throughout the year and was the basis on which the budget would be set for the following year.

In response to a question relating to the £150,000 cut from planned delivery savings, it was explained that a review had taken place of the areas previously identified where savings were achievable. Some areas had already achieved significant savings eg energy and procurement, and it was recognised service reviews would be the area where savings were likely to be made in the future.

Reference was made to the significant loss of income as a result of the decision not to increase car parking charges. The Leader stated that this was a political decision taken in light of the impact of the recession and

following consultation with businesses. He believed that the decision was the right one, but acknowledged that this had resulted in a problem in balancing the budget.

A question was asked about the impact of the pay freeze on staff morale. In response, the Leader acknowledged that staff morale was important. He explained that constructive discussions had taken place with staff representatives and there was a clear understanding of what was required and what the Council was trying to achieve. He expressed his appreciation to the staff and the staff representatives, who had approached this issue in a constructive and realistic manner, particularly in light of the results of the national pay award discussions.

The Chief Executive added that he considered the pay freeze did not have a particularly adverse effect on staff. There was greater concern about public sector funding in the next few years and the impact this would have on budgets, as well as the Local Government Review issue. He stated that staff understood the problems and there had been a real acceptance of the pay freeze.

In response to a question from Councillor Burall about the status of the Downham Market Memorial Ground cricket square and why this was not included in the special expenses for Downham Market, the Deputy Chief Executive undertook to investigate and respond.

A question was asked with regard to the ability to maintain the required General Fund Balance. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that he was satisfied that the balance could be maintained without difficulty for 2010/11. The impact of reduced grant levels in future years may be challenging, but experience showed that service areas generally underspent each year.

The Chairman commented that the staff were valued and particularly the way in which they continued to meet the challenges presented.

**CSC51: EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**CSC52: ASSET MANAGEMENT: LYNNSPORT FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Chairman reminded Members that this report had been considered by the Resources and Performance Panel. He advised that the matter had been brought to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee in order to gain an understanding of the decision to move this proposal forward now, in light

of recent reports relating to the potential Trust Status proposals for Leisure and Arts.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the work relating to the feasibility study was likely to take at least 12 months, while the Trust issue, if pursued, was likely to be determined in 6 months. It was considered that the timing was right as it was important to gain an understanding of the best use of the site and to determine what might be handed over to a future Trust.

In response to a question relating to potential future Trust Management issues, the Chief Executive advised that a report on this subject would be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance stated that the feasibility study was not set in stone and could be varied in the future based on information which may become available. It was considered that the proposal to progress with Option 4 represented the best value over the 10 year period of the forward plan, as identified in the Decade of Development report. He added that any proposals which arose from the feasibility study would be the subject of further reports to Cabinet for approval.

Reference was made to the protection of land relating to the former rail track which ran through the site. The Portfolio Holder for Performance confirmed that the rail track bed was subject to some protection and the intention was that it would be used to provide cycling, vehicular and pedestrian access and there was no intention to build on it. The protected land was not an impediment to development.

With regard to other potential uses on the site in the future, the Portfolio Holder for Performance gave an assurance that the potential provision of other facilities on the site in the future had not been ruled out.

Councillor Burall made reference to the amendment to the recommendation relating to the percentage for affordable housing and asked whether consideration had been given to the impact on residual values.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance stated that the requirement for 30% affordable housing was the basis of this report, but would be changed to 15% in line with the Council's emerging Core Strategy. With regard to whether this figure was flexible and could be varied from time to time, the Portfolio Holder stated that the 15% figure would be used as the basis for the financial elements of the feasibility study. However, it was possible for the percentage to be changed, in line with the policy in place at the time any planning applications were submitted.

In response to a question, the Finance and Resources Manager advised that if a housing project was seeking financial support from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), then the HCA would look at the

Council's policy at the time. He confirmed that figure was not set in stone and could be changed before any proposal reached the planning application stage.

Following further discussion, Councillor Burall proposed the following recommendation to Council, which was seconded by Councillor Tyler and on being put to the vote, was carried.

**RECOMMENDED:** That this Committee recommends that ongoing work on the feasibility study for Option 4 looks at a range of affordable housing percentage options against costs.

CSC53: **KING'S LYNN FOOTBALL CLUB – LEASE OF THE WALKS FOOTBALL STADIUM**

The Chairman made reference to the Cabinet decision and acknowledged the need to act quickly on this matter. The Committee discussed issues relating to the decision and the new lease which was currently being negotiated.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

CSC54: **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

There was none.

CSC55: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting was scheduled to be held on **Monday 22 February 2010** at 6.00 pm.

**Meeting closed at 7.43 pm**