

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

**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee  
held on Wednesday 4 August 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),  
Mrs A Clery-Fox (substitute for P Burall), D Collis, C Crofts,  
I Gourlay (substitute for A Tyler), M Langwade (substitute for G Sandell),  
M Pitcher, D J Pope and J M Tilbury

Other Member Present: Councillor N Daubney

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Burall, G Sandell and A Tyler

**CSC16: APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Collis be appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

**CSC17: MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CSC18: URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

**CSC19: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

**CSC20: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

**CSC21: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

**CSC22: RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee noted the responses made by Council at its meeting held on 24 June 2010 to the recommendations made by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 21 June 2010, in respect of the Duty to Respond to Petitions.

**CSC23: MATTERS CALLED-IN PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12**

There was none.

**CSC24: REGENERATION – DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

The Chairman thanked the Leader and the Chief Executive for their attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman stated that the Committee wished to gain assurance and an understanding of the factors taken into account by Cabinet in making the decisions as set out in the report. He further added that he had read the minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Panel, in respect of the report, and highlighted that the Committee would only address issues that they felt the Panel had not fully considered. The two key elements the Committee sought assurances on was the proposed funding for the Waterfront Project and the College of West Anglia (COWA).

Councillor Tilbury drew Members' attention to Page 46, paragraph 6.6 and questioned why the development of a Town Centre Strategy (TCS) for King's Lynn had not been included in the recommendations and sought clarity on what the aim of the TCS would be. The Chief Executive explained that the TCS had not been included in the recommendations as it would be written in-house and not by external consultants. Officers had most of the data which would be collated to form the TCS, but he highlighted that there may be a need to buy in more up-to-date expertise to address the role changes in retail, such as the impact of internet shopping and the strength of out of town shopping. He further added that the aim of the TCS would be to make the role of the town centre and its purpose more coherent and stronger and to identify areas for improved viability that could be funded through possible future Section 106 contributions.

Councillor Tilbury stated that he regularly heard complaints about the standard of the retail shops in the Town Centre and he further questioned whether the TCS would be likely to improve this image. In response, the Leader stated that the retail industry had improved greatly following the completion of the regeneration of the Town Centre and would continue to do so. He further reported that improvements to the retail image of the Town Centre would be addressed in the TCS. The Chairman stated that it would be useful to see evidence of what types of retail shops attracted what type of shoppers in the TCS, which the Leader concurred with.

Councillor Gourlay made reference to the £190,000 funding earmarked for Car Park Signage and questioned whether this would include 'Car Park Full' signage. He made further reference to the £500,000 funding earmarked for Waterfront Sea Defences, and stated that he was surprised that this Council was continuing with this type of funding and reported that the new Coalition Government had, on record, stated that 'the public purse should not pay for sea defences'. He further questioned if it was 'normal' for a local authority to fund a college.

The Leader responded and stated that the 'Car Park Full' signage would be included in the Car Parking Signage funding. With regard to the sea defence funding, he explained that legislation required the Council to provide adequate sea defences for the Borough, and the funding allocated would upgrade the existing defences and allow for further development of the sea defences in the future. The Leader further reported that it was unusual for a local authority to fund a college. The Cabinet had taken the decision to support the College of West Anglia (COWA) as the success of King's Lynn's future depended greatly on the retention of skills and to give an opportunity to the young people of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to learn these skills through the COWA. He further highlighted that Ofsted had judged the COWA to be 'Outstanding', which was the first time a college in Norfolk or Cambridgeshire had achieved such a high award. The campus of the COWA was currently 'unfit for purpose' and the Council had a responsibility to protect the existence of its outstanding College. It was anticipated that the Council's decision to fund the COWA would encourage others to do so. He added that a full report would be submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor Collis also made reference to the earmarked funding for the COWA and questioned whether the funding was provisional subject to talks with the County Council and the College. The Leader stated that talks were ongoing with the County Council and reiterated that a full detailed report would be submitted to the Cabinet in September.

Councillor Collis requested clarification of paragraphs 6.8 to 6.11 which referred to the Waterfront Site and the Marina. The Leader reported that the Marina project was always dependant on private developers, and whilst the Marina would still remain an aspiration of this administration, the reality of the current economic situation now prohibited developers coming forward. The Waterfront Site remained a major asset to the Council and there was a need to ensure that the key structural works are carried out to bring the site up to market testing readiness and maintain the Marina design.

The Chairman questioned whether there was any evidence base to show that the development of a Marina could help local authorities get out of a recession. The Leader reported that the evidence base for the creation of the Marina Project was considerable prior to the current economic recession. He highlighted that there was still a great deal the Council could do to enhance the Waterfront Site for the benefit of the town and Borough's economic vitality.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Pitcher, the Leader forwarded congratulations to the Officers and Enforcement Team for their vigilance in finally getting the bulldozers in to clear the Grain Silo Site. He stated that, the site, once cleared, would be a neat and tidy area and could have the potential to be used for river trips and to cater for visiting yachts.

Councillor Crofts made reference to the multi-storey car park being slipped to 2013/2014 and questioned whether there was an evidence base of need for a second multi-storey car park in King's Lynn. He further questioned whether any consideration had been given towards improvements to the Bus Station or possibly the creation of a 'Park and Ride' facility. The Leader reported that there was an evidence base need for a multi-storey car park which would negate the take-up of acres of valuable land/streetscape currently used as car parking and this administration wanted to redress this and reinstate the streetscape by reducing on-street parking. The Chief Executive added that it was not the intention to add to the numbers of car parking spaces, but this was an opportunity to develop existing car parking sites. He further reported that the King's Lynn Area Transport Strategy (KLATS) would be submitted to the Local Development Task Group for consideration and a full report on the Car Parking Strategy would be submitted to Cabinet at a future date. He further added that the 'Park and Ride' issue would be addressed in the KLATS.

Councillor Mrs Clery-Fox made reference to the cars parked on the Boal Quay and stated that it would vastly improve the quayside if the parking was not allowed and more benches and litter bins be placed along the quayside for the use of residents and visitors to the town. The Leader concurred with the Councillor and stated that the problems associated with parking on Boal Quay would be addressed in the Car Parking Strategy.

Councillor Gourlay questioned whether there was any evidence base on the private sector take-up to build a multi-storey car park.

In response to a question from Councillor Collis on the placement of the proposed pontoons, the Leader stated that there were 2/3 areas on the river that had constant deep water where larger vessels could berth, and it was anticipated that the pontoons would be placed at these areas and in front of the Grain Silo site to accommodate visiting yachts.

The Chief Executive reiterated that a detailed report on the Pontoons and Car Parking Strategy would be presented to Cabinet and would address the issue raised by Councillor Gourlay in relation to the capital investment of private sector interest in building a multi-storey car park. He further added that NCP owned one car park in the town but have taken no active steps to develop a multi-storey car park.

In response to Councillor Tilbury's question on whether the Council would prefer to keep car parking in-house or hand it over to the private sector, the Chief Executive further reported that a business case would be made

for each project and reminded Members that the multi-storey car park project had slipped to 2013/2014 and would be reassessed at that time.

The Chairman made reference to page 45 paragraph 5.3 and questioned whether there was any evidence base and risk assessment carried out on the use of ASTA powerproject software. The Leader explained that the Council had already utilised the ASTA powerproject software and it was a case of making full use of an asset the Council already had to assist the process.

The Chairman made reference to Social and economic drivers of land change use in the British space economy, which dealt with the social, economic, political, legal physical and planning aspects of urban and rural land use and questioned whether Cabinet had given consideration to the issues it highlighted in its decision making process, in particular that areas such as West Norfolk, on the edge of the economic growth of London and the South East might be involved in growth in financial services, education, health and retail and the creative industries. Also the development of computing and communications technologies would lead to more multifunctional "hot offices" and loosen spacial ties. The Leader stated that that the Land Use Policy, whilst useful, looked at the longer term development proposals. He highlighted that it would be necessary to put in the appropriate infrastructure into the area, such as a stronger broadband before it could advance in the technology sector. He further added that a request for funding had been submitted to EEDA for a rural broadband scheme and it was proposed to trial this in the southern part of the borough and in and around Downham Market. He also stated the importance of building up the manufacturing sector, which was already strong in this area.

**CSC25: 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 may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**CSC26: REGENERATION SERVICE REVIEW**

The Committee discussed issues relating to the Regeneration Service Review and proposed changes to the management structure, as set out in the report to Cabinet. It was noted that the key aim of the service review had been to balance tightened resource availability with the need to retain the capacity to continue to deliver the Council's regeneration and economic growth and prosperity objectives. The Leader and Chief Executive responded to questions from Members.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

CSC27: **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

There was none.

CSC28: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

**Meeting closed at 7.00pm**