

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

**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee  
held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 at 6pm  
in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors I Mack (Chairman)  
B Ayres, D J Collis (substitute for I Gourlay) J Collop, G Howman, A Lovett,  
G Sandell, M Tilbury and T Manley.

**Other Member Present:**

Councillor A Beales, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Commercial Services.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor I Gourlay.

**CSC52: APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman took the Chair. He took the opportunity to pass his and the Committee's best wishes on to Councillor Gourlay for a speedy recovery.

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

**CSC53: MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CSC54: URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was no urgent business to report.

**CSC55: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CSC56: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present under Standing Order 34.

**CSC57: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman had no correspondence to report.

CSC58: **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee noted the response made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 1 November 2011 to the recommendation made by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 19th October 2011, in respect of the following:

- Recycling of Waste

CSC59: **MATTERS CALLED-IN PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12**

There were no matters called-in pursuant to Standing Order 12.

CSC60: **EXCLUSION OF THE 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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.”

CSC61: **NAR OUSE REGENERATION AREA (LAND TO THE EAST OF NAR OUSE WAY) – PROPOSED LAND DISPOSAL**

The Chairman explained that it was understood that the decision in relation to the proposed land disposal had already been made by Cabinet and as there had been no call-in, the scrutiny process would not suspend the decision or offer an alternative. He invited Members to put forward questions.

Councillor Collop explained that he had requested that the item be put forward to allow Members an opportunity to question the Portfolio Holder who had not been able to attend the recent Resources and Performance Panel meeting when the item had been considered. He asked the Portfolio Holder to outline what issues he and his fellow Cabinet Members had taken into consideration when making this important decision.

In response, the Portfolio Holder referred to the Cabinet report which he stated clearly set out the approach that had been taken whilst not under estimating any potential impacts that had been considered when making the decision. He explained that the benefits in disposing of the site were considerable and were not just related to a capital receipt but would facilitate the development of several business uses that would provide employment and inward investment opportunities. The proposed developer had also provided estimated job outputs and would construct highway infrastructure from the Nar Ouse Way that would serve and benefit other parts of the NORA site. The Portfolio Holder also outlined what issues had been taken into consideration in relation to the impact on the Town Centre.

Councillor Collop referred to other developments that had been granted planning permission on the outskirts of town and existing businesses that could potentially detract business away from the town centre. There was a significant amount of retail space situated on the outskirts of town and some Members of the Resources and Performance Panel had expressed concern that resources between the town centre and the outskirts of town could be potentially stretched. He also referred to the proposed roadshows/workshops that were to be held to identify issues affecting the town centres and were aimed at identifying potential solutions.

The Portfolio Holder explained that careful consideration had been given to all the issues in relation to the proposal, some of which were not in the direct control of the Council. It was very difficult to quantify the impact on the town centre, however, the benefits of the proposal were much more transparent. Internet shopping and other cultural factors were also having an impact on town centres.

Councillor Lovett referred to the lack of quality shops in King's Lynn town centre and stated that he supported the proposals and subsequent Cabinet decision. In response to a further question, the Property Services Manager outlined the discussions and thinking which had been behind the initial disposal terms for the land and he confirmed that he was comfortable recommending them to Cabinet.

Councillor Manley concurred with the views expressed by the Vice-Chairman. He referred to the Local Development Core Strategy, the discussions with the private owners of the Vancouver Quarter and the potential impact of the proposal on the future of the town centre. He also questioned whether discussions and views had been obtained on the proposals from the Borough Council's planning department as planning permission would need to be obtained.

The Portfolio Holder explained that careful consideration and detailed discussions had been held in relation to the initial disposal terms outlined in the report. He acknowledged that planning permission would need to be sought and discussions would need to be held as the proposed development was a significant departure from the outputs envisaged in the Millennium Community Agreement (MCA) and would need to be approved by partners.

In response to a question from Councillor Howman, the Property Services Manager confirmed that the site had been owned historically by the Council for a considerable number of years. In response to a further question, the Portfolio Holder explained that since the MCA agreement was entered into back in 2006, there had been considerable economic and cultural change and it also needed to reflect the current commercial reality.

In response to a question from Councillor Sandell, the Property Services Manager explained in more detail the clawback provisions.

In response to further questions from Councillor Collop, the Portfolio Holder explained that it was not possible to enter into a covenant in relation to the number of job outputs that would result from the proposal. The Portfolio Holder undertook to clarify how much additional funding (excluding this capital receipt) was required to support the Council's Capital Programme.

In response to a question raised by the Chairman, the Chief Executive explained that work was currently being carried out on revamping a strategy for the town centres of King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market. He also referred to 3 roadshows/workshops that were currently being scheduled in each of the town centres which would involve a strong input from retailers and other operators to help inform trends and identify future solutions. However, footfall in King's Lynn town centre remained healthy despite the current economic climate.

Councillor Tilbury suggested that on-line shopping had more of an impact on supermarkets etc situated out of town rather those businesses in the town centre. Councillor Tilbury also referred to the lack of quality retail currently on offer in King's Lynn town centre.

Councillor Collop highlighted the importance of ensuring that all 3 town centres, King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market were considered in any new initiative/proposals and that the focus was just not on King's Lynn. He took the opportunity to thank the Portfolio Holder for attending and answering Members questions and also acknowledged the work carried out by officers.

## **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

### **CSC62: PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

The list of Portfolio Holders' Decisions made under Delegated Powers was noted.

In response to a query from Councillor Tilbury in relation to the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the roofs at King's Court and Lynnsport, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Energy Efficiency Officer had identified that the Council would benefit from savings by generating and using its own renewable energy alongside the environmental benefit. He also confirmed that the tariffs (Feed in Tariff) were based on the revised lower Government subsidy figures.

The Chairman acknowledged the constructive discussions that had taken place and thanked the Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive and Property Services Manager for attending the meeting.

CSC63: **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 6pm.

**Meeting closed at 6.50pm**