

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
held on Thursday 20th June 2013 at 6pm
in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

PRESENT:

Councillors C Joyce (Chairman)
J Collop, J Loveless (Vice-Chairman), A Lovett, T Manley,
Mrs K Mellish, J Moriarty (substitute) and G Sandell

Other Members Present:

Councillor N Daubney, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources
Councillor A Beales, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Officers:

David Thomason, Deputy Chief Executive

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D J Collis and Councillor M Tilbury.

CSC13: MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CSC14: URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

There was no urgent business to report.

CSC15: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CSC16: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor A Tyler: CSC20 Notice of Motion 2/12 – Councillor A Tyler

CSC17: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman had no correspondence to report.

CSC18: RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no previous Committee recommendations.

CSC19: MATTERS CALLED-IN PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12

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

CSC20: NOTICE OF MOTION 2/12 – COUNCILLOR A TYLER

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor A Tyler questioned whether when Cabinet determined their decision they had considered and debated the merits of a change in governance structure to that of the existing executive arrangements. He also suggested that there was no “right time” for officers and Members to undertake the work involved to investigate in full the merits of reverting back to a Committee System but now was “as a good as time as any”. In response, the Leader explained that Cabinet had responded and complied with the question raised in the Notice of Motion in that the opportunity did exist to change to the Committee System of Governance and that that fact would be reported to Full Council.

Councillor A Tyler further questioned whether Cabinet had considered that a regular review should be conducted to consider where efficiencies and savings could be made particular in light of the current economic and social climate. The Leader highlighted that this issue did not form part of the Notice of Motion and therefore had not been considered by Cabinet when coming to their decision. That aside, he did explain that there was an on-going Cost of Reduction work programme in order to achieve efficiencies and savings and that programme was regularly reviewed with reports being presented both to Cabinet and via the monthly Monitoring Report which was issued to all Members.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Lovett, Councillor A Tyler clarified that he would like to see a review of the governance structure every four years. Councillor A Tyler further suggested that there was discontentment expressed by some Members, not only within his group, with the current arrangements. The Leader stated that it was not wise for Councillor A Tyler to make such a sweeping statement particularly in relation to Conservative Group Members without sufficient evidence to back this up. Councillor A Tyler acknowledged that such a statement should not have been made and would not be made in the future.

Councillor Moriarty explained that he had attended the Cabinet meeting on the 4th June at which the Leader had clearly expressed his views. He questioned whether the decision in relation to the Notice in Motion had been made prior to the actual Cabinet meeting, particularly as there had been no debate at the meeting. The Leader highlighted that the Cabinet meeting was a public meeting, all Members would have also had an opportunity to read the report and that Cabinet had not pre-determined the decision. He further reiterated that Cabinet had responded directly to the Notice of Motion and that a Cost Reduction Programme was in place which was reviewed regularly which also included all elements of the democratic process/structure.

Councillor J Collop suggested that, particularly in light of the reduction in the number of Panels, some Members did not have a function/role to fulfill with the number of appointments being limited. He further questioned whether there had been any consultation carried out with Members to ascertain their views on changing the current governance structure. In particular, he stated that Members of his Group struggled to find an appropriate platform to contribute and raise such issues. The Leader explained that it was not within the remit of the Policy & Review Panels to scrutinise Cabinet decisions but any Member could approach the relevant Chairman of the Panels to request that a particular item was placed on the work programme.

Councillor J Loveless, whilst recognising it was not particularly pertinent to the Cabinet's decision, referred to the role of the Panels which he stated was to consider and offer their views on reports prior to being determined by Cabinet /Council, whereas the remit of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was to scrutinise any such decisions that had been made by Cabinet. He therefore questioned where Members could raise and debate such issues as a change in policy (i.e. governance structure). The Leader reiterated that the Policy & Development Panels had a wide remit and any Member could request items for consideration by the Panel for their work programme. The Deputy Chief Executive also explained that the Panels were the appropriate route for any such debates, citing the recent Car Parking Promotion options report as an example.

The Chairman questioned how amenable Cabinet would be to the alternative that existed to the current executive arrangements, particularly in light that the alternative would not see a Cabinet in existence. The Leader explained no debate had been held at the Cabinet meeting on any alternative governance arrangements but Cabinet had responded in full to the Notice in Motion that had been put forward.

CSC21: **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 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".

CSC22: **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

- Lease Renewal – Cliff Top Car Park, Hunstanton

Councillor J Collop raised a number of issues on the lease terms, financial implications and occupancy rates of the car park. Both the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive provided justification and a number of reasons as to why it was sensible for the Council to continue to lease and operate the pay and display car park. In

response to a query from Councillor Lovett, the rent review basis was clarified.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The following Portfolio Holder Decisions were noted:

- Loan of 15 Paintings from the collections at The Town hall to the Marriotts Warehouse / Green Quay, King's Lynn
- Norfolk Mineral Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and Norfolk Water Site Specific Allocations DPD – Main Modifications and Additional Modifications – Invitation to make representations

CSC23: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 17th July 2013 at 6pm.

Meeting closed at 6.45pm