

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
held on Tuesday 28th January 2014 at 6pm
in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

PRESENT:

Councillors C Joyce (Chairman)
D J Collis, J Collop, J Loveless (Vice-Chairman),
A Lovett, T Manley, Mrs K Mellish, D Tyler and D Whitby.

Portfolio Holders Present:

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

Management Team/Officers:

Dale Gagen, Corporate Project Officer
Debbie Gates, Executive Director

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Tilbury.

CSC70: **COUNCILLOR G SANDELL**

The Committee stood for a minutes' silence in memory of the late Councillor Garry Sandell, who had been a Member of the Committee.

CSC71: **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CSC72: **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was no urgent business to report.

CSC73: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

CSC74: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor G McGuinness for item CSC78.

CSC75: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman had no correspondence to report.

CSC76: **RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no previous Committee recommendations.

CSC77: **MATTERS CALLED-IN PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 12**

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

CSC78: **PROPOSED ACCESS ROAD BETWEEN EDWARD BENEFER WAY AND LYNNSPORT**

In response to a question raised by the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration confirmed that the Borough Council did own the land in question and to the best of his knowledge, there would be no secondary claim on it.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor McGuinness explained that the proposals had been discussed at the recent King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee and referred to the significant spend to enable the scheme to be shovel ready and the subsequent funding required to finance the selected option potentially from the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and questioned what authority would be responsible in considering the planning application.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration stated that he had always made it clear from the onset that there was an element of risk in securing the finance for the scheme but the proposals did adhere to funding guidelines in terms of the LEPs but other potential funding schemes would also be explored. The Corporate Project Officer clarified that the Borough Council would be the Planning Authority who would consider the application.

Councillor McGuinness further questioned whether the Borough Council would be making an investment in the scheme which would likely make it more desirable for private investors. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that the proposals would generate a significant capital receipt for the Council and provide much needed housing however the road needed to be in place for the scheme to proceed.

The Chairman questioned whether the Borough Council would consider providing both the land and also invest in the scheme. The Leader confirmed consideration could be given to both.

In response to a further question, it was explained that although the proposals were at an early stage, when the tendering exercise commenced there would be a requirement for an element of social

housing which would be pepper potted thorough out the development.

Councillor D J Collis stated that it was important to develop the scheme and open up the housing land at Marsh Lane and the existing access was inadequate. However he had health and safety concerns over the crossing points on the cycle path.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained the various options which had been considered and the proposed option minimised the environmental impact on birds and hedges. He explained the biggest issue was the drainage of the ditch which would need to be culverted and would be an expensive element of the proposals and he also acknowledged that there may be an increase in water voles etc by culverting the ditch. The cycle route would not be moved but careful consideration had been given to the safety aspects and the majority of cyclists supported the proposals.

Councillor Manley questioned where any additional money required would come from if the monies generated from the receipt of second homes income ceased. The Leader explained that the Borough Council were in a position to fund the preferred option from existing reserves or from borrowing.

The Corporate Project Officer also explained at this stage, officers were only being asked to work up Option 3 so the finer details in relation to such issues as cycling crossing points would emerge and the Council would work with both developers and local interest groups.

A map detailing the proposed route was circulated to the Committee.

Councillor J Collop referred to the considerable investment required to progress the scheme and that there was no mention within the report of the type of houses that would be developed. He also suggested that early consideration should be given to whom was responsible for the maintenance of the road and cutting the grass.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that such issues were outside of the current proposed Cabinet recommendation but such issues would be addressed at the planning stage.

Councillor J Collop questioned what the timescale was for the development of the actual housing. The Corporate Project Officer explained that it was hoped that grant funding would be in place by October/November 2014 which would be followed by progression to the planning stage. Subject to funding, it was hoped to start with ground works in April 2015.

Councillor Mrs Mellish stated she felt the project was an excellent scheme but did raise slight concern with the impact of culverting the

ditch. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that the option would have less environmental impact on birds and hedges which would also make the scheme more visually and aesthetically pleasing.

The Chairman questioned if further down the scheme it was discovered that there was a greater impact on water voles etc as a result of the water course, would Cabinet reconsider their decision. The Corporate Project Officer explained advice had been sought from an Environmental Scientist.

Councillor J Loveless referred to the plan and questioned the route which showed it passed back to Lynnsport and had links to Greenpark Avenue which had not been in the original scheme as part of the pinch point funding application. The Corporate Officer explained that the plans had been drawn up in consultation with Norfolk County Council who were advising on the best route. He also advised that the part of road (after the new housing sites) within the LynnSport site would be owned by the Borough Council and not adopted as a County Council Highway.

The Chairman reiterated and questioned again whether in light of not securing any external funding whether the Council were in a position to meet the costs from reserves or borrowing. The Leader confirmed that the Council would be able to do this and it was important that the road was built. He expressed disappointment that the original pinch point funding application had not been successful. The Leader also referred to the recent publication of the Council's Financial Plan and that the Cabinet's recommendation was a good use of the Council's financial resources and would generate a significant capital receipt.

In response to a further question from Councillor McGuinness, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that the proposed option should alleviate some traffic congestion in areas such as Marsh Lane, North Lynn and the Gaywood Clock area. This should result in improvements in to air quality in these areas.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration confirmed that discussions had been and would continue with local cyclist groups.

CSC79: **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

- **Princess Theatre**

Copies of the pending delegated decision in relation to the Princess Theatre had been circulated to the Committee

Councillor D J Collis referred to Section 4.1 of the report that detailed financial implications to fund the necessary works and equipment and

highlighted that the figure stipulated was £26,000 but in fact there was also a proposal to invest in projection equipment at a cost of a further £15,000 making a total investment of £41,000. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration acknowledged that the total figure was in fact £41,000.

In relation to a question from Councillor J Collop, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration also confirmed that if for any reason the theatre closed or the operator chose to cease the business, the projection equipment would be owned by the Council.

Councillor J Collop referred to the fact the Theatre was not currently generating a profit and questioned how much the Council were willing to assist the Theatre and also how much were they willing to generally help other businesses. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained whilst the Council did not have an “open pocket”, the Theatre was improving their offer and providing a good service and therefore it was important that it remained open.

Councillor J Collop also questioned who was responsible for the fabric of the building, including the seats etc. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained, albeit outside of the proposed decision, that he was happy to provide him a copy of the Terms & Conditions of the Lease.

In response to a question from Councillor D J Collis in relation to Council Tax, the Leader stated that he was not willing to discuss the issue at the meeting but would provide any appropriate details in confidence.

CSC:80 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 18th February 2014 at 6pm.

Meeting closed at 7pm