

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET MEETING ON 29 JULY 2014 FROM  
THE REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL MEETING  
HELD ON 23 JULY 2014**

**REC35: CABINET REPORT – AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**

The Environmental Health Manager presented the Cabinet Report which highlighted the work which had been carried out to draw up an Air Quality Action Plan and the mechanism to be used to consult with the public and stakeholders on the proposed air quality reduction measures.

The Panel was informed that the Borough Council had a statutory duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess air quality across its district. Air quality monitoring had shown that the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide exceeded the mean objectives in two areas in King's Lynn.

The Environmental Health Manager introduced Ian Parkes from Norfolk County Council, Planning and Transportation and explained that he had provided information relating to traffic which was included in the action plan.

The Environmental Health Manager also introduced the Contaminated Land Coordinator to the Panel, who had assisted with the creation of the Air Quality Action Plan.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that the Air Quality Action Plan set out twenty measures which could be put forward to improve air quality. The measures would be subject to a consultation exercise before they were formally adopted. The Environmental Health Manager referred the Panel to the Air Quality Action Plan non-technical summary, which had been included in the agenda and set out the twenty proposed policy actions.

The action plan set out actions for transport, homes, businesses and industry as well as policy actions which set out how the Council would make decisions affecting air quality.

The Environmental Health Manager highlighted some of the actions set out in the plan including potential use of the bus lane for taxis and private hire vehicles, encouraging the use of public transport, traffic and parking control and the West Lynn to King's Lynn Ferry.

The Environmental Health Manager reminded the Panel that the actions set out in the draft air quality action plan would be subject to a public consultation exercise before submission to DEFRA. Additional detail, including cost benefit analysis would also be added in due course.

The Chairman thanked the Environmental Health Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, some of which are summarised below.

Councillor Shorting referred to policy action 11 which explained that message signs had been provided to direct drivers to available car parking spaces in King's Lynn and it was hoped that this would prevent extra journeys by drivers hunting for somewhere to park. Councillor Shorting felt that it would be useful to have more information on the signs regarding the number of spaces available as currently the signs only showed if the car park was busy, full or had spaces available. The Executive Director explained that the signs did show the number of spaces available at St James Multi Storey Car Park, and work was being carried out to display more accurate information for the Cattle Market car park. It was difficult to monitor the amount of spaces available for car parks such as the Tuesday Market Place, where there were several entrances and exits.

Councillor Shorting commented that 'bottle-necks', particularly at the Southgates roundabout and Gaywood had a significant impact on traffic flow, which could result in reduced air quality. Ian Parkes from Norfolk County Council explained that Norfolk County Council looked at all options when configuring a road layout and often the width of road available had restrictions on how the traffic could be managed. He agreed to pass on the comments regarding 'bottle-necks' to his colleagues at Norfolk County Council Highways.

Councillor Moriarty asked for more information on how the Environmental Health Department worked with the Planning Department and if there was potential for them to become more involved in the Planning Application process. The Environmental Health Manager explained that they were consulted on all applications which could have a detrimental effect on air quality. The Environmental Health Department could suggest measures which would mitigate the impact on air quality and could include creation of a travel plan, charging points for electric vehicles etc. The Planning Department would then decide if these measures should be included as conditions in the Planning Permission. The Contaminated Land Coordinator reminded the Panel that a Section 106 agreement could also form part of a Planning Permission and referred to the Tesco's and Sainsbury's development at the Hardwick. Section 106 money from these developments had been used for other transport initiatives which included the proposed improvements to the bus station.

Ian Parkes from Norfolk County Council explained that if a large development came forward for Planning Permission, the developer may be required to carry out a transport assessment and create a travel plan which would demonstrate how travel by sustainable means would be encouraged.

Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsburgh referred to action point 13 which explained that the ferry at West Lynn provided a car free route to the town centre with parking available at Ferry Square, West Lynn. 'Park and Sail' accounted for over 90,000 return journeys per year. Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsburgh commented that Norfolk County Council had previously withdrawn its funding for the Ferry and asked if this should be reviewed, given the positive impact it must have on air quality.

Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsburgh further commented that he could not find any reference to the promotion of travelling by railway in the action plan and it was explained that this would be included in action point 6 which would look at ways to make public transport more attractive. Councillor Sampson explained that to make rail travel into King's Lynn more attractive, improvements would be required to the car parking available at Downham Market and Watlington, along with improved public transport links to the stations.

Councillor Crofts referred to action point 5 which explained that the Council were considering, with Norfolk County Council, if taxis and private hire vehicles could use the bus route which went from the Friars to Boal Street. Councillor Crofts felt that this would reduce the amount of traffic using London Road and should definitely be trialled. The Environmental Health Manager explained that the public consultation exercise would hopefully pick up if there were any negatives to this solution, for example it could have an impact on cyclists using the route. Ian Parkes explained that other issues to opening up the bus route to taxis and private hire vehicles could include management of users of the route as currently a bollard system was in place which was activated by transponders situated on the buses.

In response to a question from Councillor Bambridge, who had been invited to the meeting as a member of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee, the Environmental Health Manager explained that currently the provision of green spaces and addition of trees had not been included in the actions, but the public consultation exercise would pick up if this was something that should be taken into consideration.

Councillor Mrs Watson referred to the new slip road which had been installed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Roundabout and felt that the merging lane was not long enough, meaning that it was difficult to see what was coming when trying to merge into traffic. The Executive Director explained that, since its installation, Norfolk County Council had made a minor change to the slip road for safety purposes. The Executive Director highlighted the significant positive impact the new road had on traffic flow in the area. Councillor Mrs Collop explained that issues relating to the slip road had been highlighted at a recent Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel meeting and were being investigated by Norfolk County Council.

Councillor Bubb referred to the action points and raised concern that no mention of 'park and ride' schemes had been mentioned. The Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Councillor Long, explained that this had not been discounted, but had been trialled a number of years ago and had not been successful as visitors using the park and ride still had to sit in the same traffic coming into the town centre. The Portfolio Holder for Environment referred to other 'park and ride' schemes which relied heavily on private sector subsidy. Councillor Bubb commented that consideration should be given to the amount of vehicles which would not need to come into the town centre, should a 'park and ride' scheme be implemented.

The Executive Director referred to a recent incident where the traffic lights on Valingers Road were not working and explained that this had improved traffic flow out of the town centre. The Council had asked Norfolk County Council to investigate this area and see if temporarily reconfiguring the set-up of the traffic lights, would improve the traffic flow.

Councillor Pitcher asked if the Air Quality Steering Group had regard to the Local Development Framework and how future development could have an effect on air quality, particularly for the proposed development at South Wootton and Lynnsport. The Environmental Health Manager explained that once the Air Quality Action Plan had been adopted it would be Council Policy. There were also Air Quality Management policies included within the Local Development Framework. The Environmental Health Department would also continue to be involved in the Planning Application process.

In response to a question from Councillor Whitby, the Environmental Health Manager explained that a foot bridge from West Lynn to the town centre had been considered in the past, but would be impractical due to cost and the impact it would have on river navigation. It could also have a detrimental effect on the Ferry Service.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That Cabinet note the draft Air Quality Action Plan and publish for public consultation.

REC36: **CABINET REPORT – HOMELESSNESS REVIEW AND DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

The Housing Services Operations Manager presented the Cabinet report which sought approval of the draft Homelessness Strategy Consultation Document 2014-2019.

She explained that the Council had a duty to carry out a review of homelessness in the areas and publish a homelessness Strategy which included things such as how the Council would address the causes of homelessness and introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness where possible.

The Council had a statutory duty to consult with partners and the public on the homelessness strategy before it was adopted.

The Housing Services Operations Manager highlighted some of the reasons why a person could become homeless which could include the lack of two bedroom social homes in King's Lynn and complex support needs.

The Panel was informed that the Council tried to intervene early when possible to prevent homelessness and provided advice, accommodation, support and worked with relevant partner organisations.

The Housing Services Operations Manager provided the Panel with detail on how the Council worked to try and prevent homelessness by working with landlords at the pre- eviction stage, securing accommodation and helping to secure private rented tenancies.

The Council tried to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation and could access temporary accommodation available from Freebridge Community Housing and Broadland Housing Association.

The Housing Services Operations Manager explained how the Council worked with people who had more complex needs, for example Mental Health issues and how they worked with partner organisations.

The Housing Services Operations Manager informed those present that, subject to agreement by Cabinet, the draft homelessness strategy would be subject to a public consultation exercise. Responses would then be considered and a final Homelessness Strategy would be presented to Cabinet and the Council in autumn 2014.

The Chairman thanked the Housing Services Operations Manager for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, some of which are summarised below.

Councillor Mrs Watson commended the work of the Purfleet Trust and asked if the Council worked in partnership with them. The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that the Council was working with Purfleet Trust on a 'Pathways' project.

In response to a question from Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsburgh, the Housing Services Operations Manager explained that all incidents

of homelessness were different and were considered on a case by case basis. She was unaware of how many people had been rehoused out of the area. It was sometimes necessary to provide people with accommodation out of the area if they needed specialist support or had complex needs.

Councillor Bambridge addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. She referred to incidents of rough sleeping in the Walks and asked what the process was for reporting rough sleepers. She felt that more information should be made available on the Borough Council's website. The Housing Services Operation Manager acknowledged that there were no specialist street services available to monitor incidents of rough sleeping. If the Police came across someone sleeping rough they would report it to the Council. An out of hours call service was available to provide advice to the Police and members of the public. Emergency access beds were also available. The Housing Services Operations Manager agreed to look at what information was available on the Borough Council's website.

Councillor Mrs Collingham referred to the local connection rule, which meant that only people with a local connection to the Borough, or who had resided in the Borough for three years or more, could be added to the Housing Register. The Housing Services Operation Manager explained that this criteria formed part of the Housing Allocations Policy, which had recently been subject to a review due to changes in the Localism Act. If someone was homeless the Council had a duty to find them accommodation and if necessary they would be allowed to join the housing register regardless of their local connection.

Councillor Pitcher asked if Housing Operations worked with partners to ensure the provision of affordable housing. He explained that his Parish Council were aware of a site which could potentially be used. The Housing Services Operation Manager explained that Parish Councils were encouraged to bring to their attention any housing or homelessness issues.

Councillor Mrs Watson explained that homelessness was not just an issue in King's Lynn, she was also aware of incidents in Heacham and explained that the Police were aware of the situation and had dealt with it well. The Housing Services Operation Manager explained that she was aware of some incidents in Heacham.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration, Environment and Community panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That the draft Homelessness Strategy Consultation Document 2014 to 2019 as attached at Appendix 1 is approved for public consultation.

