

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT  
AND COMMUNITY PANEL TO THE CABINET MEETING ON 7 OCTOBER 2014**

REC57:     **CABINET REPORT – COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER – LAND  
REAR OF BLACKFRIARS ROAD, KING’S LYNN**

The Chairman declared an interest in this item as a Member of Freebridge Community Housing Board and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

The Enforcement Team Leader presented the Cabinet report which sought approval for the Council to make use of its powers under Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) by promoting a Compulsory Purchase Order for a small piece of land with a garage sited on it which was adjacent to 7 Blackfriars Road, King’s Lynn.

The Enforcement Team Leader explained that Freebridge Community Housing had purchased 7 Blackfriars Road and was using the property as accommodation for the needs of those struggling with independent living. Freebridge Community Housing sought to acquire the land to facilitate much needed amenity space for parking and storage.

Freebridge Community Housing did not have the power to Compulsory Purchase the land and therefore would work in partnership with the Council.

The Enforcement Team Leader drew the Panel’s attention to the recommendations as set out in the report which would delegate authority for completion of the full process.

The Panel was informed that the Council and Freebridge Community Housing would enter into an indemnity agreement which indemnified the Council in respect of all costs, including any legal challenges and compensation liabilities arising from the exercise of the Compulsory Purchase Order. The Enforcement Team Leader confirmed that Freebridge Community Housing would also be recharged for officer resources.

The Vice Chairman thanked the Enforcement Team Leader for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, some of which are summarised below.

Councillor Bubb explained that he was unhappy with the process of the Council just ‘taking land’ and asked for confirmation that attempts had been made to contact the owner. The Portfolio Holder for Development, Councillor Mrs Spikings explained that the piece of land subject to the Order was situated within a Conservation Area and had been identified by the Derelict Land and Buildings Group as an area which needed addressing as it was detrimental to the surrounding

environment. The opportunity to acquire the land would result in the area being tidied up and brought back into use at no cost to the Borough Council. The Portfolio Holder for Development confirmed that numerous attempts had been made to identify the owner of the land.

In response to a question from Councillor Howland, the Enforcement Team Leader explained that extensive land searches had been carried out to try and find the owner of the land. Local residents had been contacted and asked for information and Freebridge Community Housing had also attempted to find the owner. Searches had been carried out over a period of six to eight months.

Councillor Pitcher asked what would happen if the land owner came forward once the Compulsory Purchase Order had been confirmed. The Enforcement Team Leader explained that this was covered in the Indemnity Agreement with Freebridge Community Housing. A compensation claim procedure would be put in place and the value of the land would be their entitlement. If the value of the land was for any reason incorrect the Indemnity Agreement would cover the difference.

In response to a question from Councillor Crofts, the Enforcement Team Leader explained that the process of putting the Order in place would take time and attempts would continue to be made to locate the owner.

In response to a question from Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsbrugh, the Enforcement Team Leader explained that the property at 7 Blackfriars Road was being used to accommodate and provide for the needs of those struggling with independent living. The property provided accommodation to four individuals who had access to an educator.

Councillor Shorting stated that he supported the scheme and was aware of some other derelict areas within the town centre which needed to be tidied up. In response to a question from Councillor Shorting, the Enforcement Team Leader explained that a formal notice would be displayed on site which may encourage the owner to come forward.

Councillor Collis commended the work of Freebridge Community Housing and explained that he would like to see the Compulsory Purchase Order progress so that the land could be tidied up and brought back into use. In response to a question from Councillor Collis, the Enforcement Team Leader explained that the valuation of the land would take place once the Order was confirmed and the valuation at this time would be what the land owner would be entitled to as compensation, should they come forward once the Order had been confirmed. The Council would retain this entitlement in a separate account and if no claim was made, within the six year time limit, the money would be reinvested to bring other derelict sites back into use.

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

That the Executive Director (Environment and Planning), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Development, be authorised to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order for the acquisition of Land Rear of 7 Blackfriars Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1NR ("the Order Land"), with a view to its subsequent disposal.

To authorise the Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments, modifications or deletions to the CPO schedule of interests and map, should this be necessary, and to finalise the making and submission of the CPO, including promoting the Council's case at public inquiry, if necessary.

Subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State to authorise the Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer to secure full title to and possession of the Order Land as appropriate by:

- i. Serving notice of confirmation of the CPO on all interested parties;
- ii. Serving notice of intention to execute a General Vesting Declaration;
- iii. Executing the General Vesting Declaration;
- iv. Serving Notices to Treat and/or Entry as appropriate.

Subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State to authorise the Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer to enter into an Indemnity Agreement which (inter alia) indemnifies the Council in respect of its costs in promoting the Order, including any compensation liabilities arising from the exercise of the compulsory purchase powers.

To authorise the Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer to dispose of the Order Land to such person, in such manner and subject to such conditions as appears to be expedient, in order to secure the best use of that the Order Land and any buildings or works which are to be constructed or carried out on it (whether by themselves or by any other person).

That the Executive Director (Environment and Planning) approves that the proceeds from the sale of the property is used for further acquisitions.

**The Chairman returned to the meeting.**

REC58: **CABINET REPORT – KING'S LYNN TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN**

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager presented the Cabinet report which presented the King's Lynn Town Centre Action

Plan. The Action Plan was a list of priorities and plans for the town centre and included actions which the Council would lead on and those which would be delivered by partners and the private sector.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager reminded the Panel that at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013 Cabinet had approved the draft King's Lynn Town Centre Action Plan for consultation. The King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership and other key stakeholders had subsequently been consulted on the plan and their responses had been included within the report.

The report also included an outline of the type of activities and initiatives which the action plan proposed to deliver in response to the Peer Challenge.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager informed those present that the Action Plan had been grouped into six themes as follows:

- High quality public realm and spaces: Creating variety and enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of the public realm to improve the perception of the town.
- Maximise historic assets: Utilising the town's historic assets to improve the town's regional position in the visitor market.
- Diversify the town centre offer: Increasing activity in areas other than the retail area, particularly along the waterfront, and vary the town centre provision.
- A town that is easily accessible: Creating a pedestrian and cycle friendly town centre environment and enhancing public transport access and facilities.
- A place for people to live, work and socialise: Focussing residential development appropriate to the historic core and creating a lively and vibrant environment which meets the needs and aspirations of people of all ages.
- Events and promotion: Marketing the town locally and regionally through a variety of small and large activities, events and promotional material.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that some of the responses received from the consultation were not relevant to the Borough Council and had been passed to the relevant organisations for consideration including Norfolk County Council Highways.

The Economic Development Officer explained that the action plan needed to be deliverable otherwise there was a danger that the action plan could become a wish list. Some of the responses to the consultation were already being addressed through other projects such as the King's Lynn Transport Interchange Project and the Air Quality

Action Plan and had been referred back to the relevant project for consideration.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager and the Economic Development Officer for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, some of which are summarised below.

Councillor Loveless addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He referred to the second action point under Theme one of the action plan which was to remove street clutter. Progress under the action stated that Information Advertising Pillars had been removed from three locations within the town centre. Councillor Loveless informed the Panel that the original intention of the advertising pillars was to allow local organisations to promote their events however, often they were used by national chains. He explained that at the moment the only places in the town centre where you could find out what was happening in the town centre was at the Tourist Information Centre or the Arts Centre. Councillor Loveless explained that, if the pillars were to be permanently removed, there was a need to have the ability to advertise the goings on in the town centre through some other means.

The Economic Development Officer confirmed that two of the three pillars had now been removed. The Economic Development Officer referred to the actions included within theme six in the action plan which was to market the town locally and regionally through a variety of small and large activities, events and promotional materials. Work to achieve the actions would be carried out in partnership with the King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership and the Business Improvement District Steering Group. The request from Councillor Loveless could be incorporated into theme six within the action plan.

The Chairman felt that if the advertising pillars were used to promote local organisations and events they could be of benefit. He felt that people were expected to go on the internet to find out information about what was happening in the town centre, but information should not be limited to the internet. Councillor Shorting commented that ad hoc visitors would not always have the opportunity to check the internet before visiting the town centre.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager agreed to pass the comments onto the King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership for consideration.

The Executive Director reminded those present of the variable message systems which had been installed on the approaches to the town centre. The signs provided information on car parking spaces available and were also able to provide highways information. The Executive Director suggested that an electronic advertising system

could be used in the town centre which could provide 'real time' information.

The Economic Development Officer reminded those present that the King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership were once again progressing proposals for a Business Improvement District and had included within their Business Plan promotion and marketing of the town centre.

Councillor Collis commented that the action plan should have timescales for completion included. He referred to recent projects which had benefitted the town centre and hoped that more work to further enhance the offer of the Tuesday Market Place and Saturday Market Place would be carried out.

Councillor Bubb commended the report and referred to the comments made by Councillor Loveless. He suggested that notice boards could be placed in the town centre, similar to those used in parishes which could be managed by the Tourist Information Centre.

Councillor Bubb felt that the Nar Loop area had been neglected within the action plan and suggested that the area could be made into a Nature Reserve. He also commented that it was crucial to regularise the opening times for the Lynn Museum and suggested that the Museum should be open on a Sunday for visitors with families who worked during the week.

In response to a question from Councillor Crofts, the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that in 2015, National Heritage Open weekend would be a four day event. Councillor Crofts commented that the Quay and Waterfront area needed to be promoted and that this could be achieved by holding more events on the Quay, Boal Quay car park and King's Staithe Square.

Councillor Mrs Collingham referred to the underutilisation of the Quayside and suggested that a children's play area should be installed to encourage visitors to the area. The Economic Development Officer commented that resources would be required to take projects such as this forward. He explained that actions within the action plan had only been included if they were achievable. The Economic Development Officer informed those present that the Action Plan would be refreshed on a regular basis and updated as appropriate.

The Vice Chairman referred to the Council's response to a comment made by English Heritage as part of the consultation exercise which was that there were no plans to produce a shop front guide for King's Lynn town centre and it was proposed that the suggested action was not included. The Economic Development Officer explained that he had consulted the Planning Department on this issue, who had advised that planning policy covered this and there was no need for a specific King's Lynn guide.

Councillor Pitcher suggested that the Council work with coach and tour operators to promote the town centre and bring in more visitors. He also agreed with the comments of others in that more work should be done to promote the waterfront area.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager informed those present that the Action Plan would be a 'live' document and refreshed on a regular basis. An annual update would be presented to the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel.

Councillor Mrs Watson informed those present that a shop front guide had been introduced in Hunstanton but was unsuccessful. She also asked if the recommendations and actions suggested by the Informal Working Group who were looking at Markets had been implemented. The Executive Director explained that a list of actions from the Informal Working Group had been produced and some actions would be implemented. He explained that the Informal Working Group would meet again following the completion of the work to the Saturday Market Place to look at how the area could be promoted and the market offer.

The Chairman requested that officers consider the comments made by the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel as appropriate.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, with a slight amendment to recommendation two (in italics below) as follows:

1. That the responses to the consultation be noted.
2. That the King's Lynn Town Centre Action Plan is approved, *subject to consideration of the comments of the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel.*