

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 29 January 2015 at 6.42 pm in the
Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

The Mayor Councillor B Ayres,

Councillors Miss L Bambridge, R P Beal, A Beales, R Bird, A Bubb, Mrs J Collingham, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, C J Crofts, N J Daubney, P Foster, G Hipperson, M Hopkins, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, Lord Howard, M Howland, G Howman, C Joyce, A Lawrence, Mrs J Leamon, B W C Long, J Loveless, A Lovett, G McGuinness, T C Manley, C Manning, Mrs K Mellish, A Morrison, Mrs E A Nockolds, M Peake, M Pitcher, D Pope, C Sampson, L Scott, Mrs V M Spikings, M S Storey, J M Tilbury, A Tyler, D Tyler, G Wareham, Mrs E Watson, D Whitby, Mrs M Wilkinson Mrs A Wright, and Mrs S Young.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Back, A R Collins, D J Collis, P Cousins, I Gourlay, R Groom, M Langwade, J Moriarty, Miss S Sandell, Mrs S Smeaton, A White and T Wright.

C70: MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 November 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C71: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared:

- i) Councillor Mrs V Spikings declared a pecuniary interest in item CAB128: Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing - Implications Of The Recent Government Announcement On Revised Thresholds. She left the meeting during consideration of the item.
- ii) Councillor A Beales declared a pecuniary interest in CAB128: Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing - Implications Of The Recent Government Announcement On Revised Thresholds. He left the meeting during consideration of the item.
- iii) Councillor A Tyler declared a pecuniary interest in any discussion relating to the Major Housing Project, as an employee of the shop involved in the objections to parts of the scheme.

C72: MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

C73: URGENT BUSINESS

None

C74: PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Mayor reported that an electronic and 2 paper petitions had been received relating to the Major Housing Project. They were being responded to in the Cabinet report.

C75: CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

In accordance with Standing Order 11.1 reports were submitted from Cabinet Members, upon which they answered questions from Members of the Council.

i) Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Culture, Tourism and Marketing

Councillor Mrs Nockolds presented her report. Councillor J Collop asked for information on the Mart meeting referred to in her report. Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained it was the annual meeting held with the Showman's Guild, all the statutory agencies and the Council to agree the detailed arrangements for the coming years Mart. Councillor Mrs Collop asked if the Mart Task Group had been disbanded, to which Councillor Nockolds reminded Members that a Task Group was set up for a specific reason and then disbanded, if there were problems which needed the Task Group to meet to discuss after the Mart this year she would call the meeting of the Group.

Councillor Mrs Watson asked for information on the Foot Golf which was to be available in Hunstanton. It was explained that the game involved playing golf with feet with a larger ball than golf ball. In response to Cllr Bird's question as to who had been consulted on the introduction of the game in Hunstanton, Councillor Nockolds informed him that it was an operational decision by officers, herself and Councillor Pope had been consulted.

Councillor Loveless asked if there would be further light shows or repeats of the previous shows in the town which he had enjoyed. Councillor Mrs Nockolds informed Members that there would be 5 extra light shows, some were the same as previously shown, but other new ones would be shown during the light festival in the town. She drew attention to the request from one of the artists who was seeking volunteers to be filmed whistling or blowing in the wind for their display.

She explained that judges from Amiens had come to judge the suggestions put forward, and commented how fortunate the town was to have the displays. It was also noted that a quarter of the Council's web site visits were to the events pages, which was good news for the area.

Councillor Hopkins also commented on the light show and the potential for future shows. Councillor Nockolds said that she hoped that in the summer festival, shop owners would light their windows with covered lights to extend the atmosphere of the light festival.

ii) **Councillor Mrs V Spikings - Development**

Councillor Mrs Spikings presented her report. Councillor McGuinness asked for some detail on the fact that Fenland District Council had joined CNC Building Control function. Councillor Mrs Spikings explained that under the duty to co-operate with each other, discussions had been held with Fenland DC and they had requested to be permitted to join the Group which had been approved. The King's Lynn staff would now operate from Wisbech, but there would also be a presence in King's Court, all of which, it was hoped, would bring business to the consortium.

iii) **Councillor A Lawrence – Housing and Community**

Councillor Lawrence presented his report. Councillor Bird asked whether there had been any progress with the Holiday Caravan Site Licensing. Councillor Lawrence explained that due to illness etc the issue hadn't been progressed before Christmas, so it was now likely to be the end of March before it came forward.

Councillor Humphrey asked whether the new requirements of labelling food ingredients by food establishments applied to voluntary and charitable organisations, and if they did would officers be able to provide guidance on any steps which needed to be taken. Councillor Lawrence informed Members that if events were held monthly or less they didn't have to be registered, although they could voluntarily register if they chose to do so. If events were held more frequently than monthly they had to be registered for food inspections. He referred Members to the Food Standards Agency website which set out all the requirements. If there were questions following that officers would be able to assist.

Councillor J Collop in referring to the number of applicants on the housing register asked if realistically there would be people on the list who would never receive a property and whether they were told the numbers on the Register when they applied. Councillor Lawrence reminded Members of the review of the Register undertaken in recent years where there had been large numbers of people taken off the

register. He referred to the 3 bands of need, and drew attention to the fact that registered providers were building new properties all the time, and work was progressing with bringing empty homes back into circulation, some people also went into private rented accommodation. He commented that there would always be people coming forward for housing, and the Council would as always endeavour to do its best and point people to the website to bid on properties. There would inevitably be those cases which turned around quickly and those which did not.

Councillor McGuinness asked if it was the case that there was a lot of social housing in the villages which people were not interested in, and if most people just bid on the town properties. Councillor Lawrence confirmed that there was often housing available in the very rural areas which many people did not want to bid on.

Councillor Pitcher asked what help was given to assist the single homeless. Councillor Lawrence made reference to the work with the Purfleet Trust to help young adults.

Councillor Leamon asked whether people on the Housing Register were disadvantaged if they did not own a computer. Councillor Lawrence explained that he did not feel they were, the process worked well, there was access to computers in the Council office and libraries etc, staff helped people to bid if required, and there was sufficient time to place bids by post etc if required.

iv) **Councillor D Pope – ICT Leisure and Public Space**

Councillor Pope presented his report. Councillor Mrs Collop asked for an update on the situation with A Boards. Councillor Pope explained that although the policy had been agreed, it had transpired that there was a requirement to obtain planning permission for them which was costly, so endeavours were being made to try to provide the whole scheme at a reduced cost.

Councillor J Collop referred to the old car parks promotions budget of £200,000 which appeared to come under a different name of Town Centre Promotions with a budget of £150,000. He asked for detail on the budget and how it had been spent and why the name and amount had been changed from previous years. Councillor Pope undertook to speak to the Executive Director to obtain a breakdown.

Councillor McGuinness asked how the figures for footfall in December were reached. Councillor Pope explained that there were counting devices throughout the town which gauged an accurate figure.

Councillor A Tyler asked how the Panto had fared this season. Councillor Pope reminded Members that it was an Alive Leisure run

facility now, but it had been successful and well supported by the community, with good staff scheduling shows.

Councillor McGuinness asked if there was any progress on changing the car park signs so the Cattle Market and Vancouver Quarter said the same thing, and if not, had consideration been given to changing the name on the new sign to read Cattle Market. Councillor Pope undertook to check again what progress had been made.

v) **Councillor A Beales – Regeneration and Industrial Assets**

Councillor Beales presented his report. Councillor A Tyler asked what the ICT Development Group meeting was as it was referred to in the report. Councillor Beales explained that it fell within Councillor Pope's portfolio, but he also attended the meeting which dealt with all ICT issues from CIC call handling, members IT, software purchases etc across the organisation. He undertook to make the minutes available should members wish to see them.

Councillor Bird asked what progress had been made on the discussions re the car park behind the Princess Theatre. Councillor Beales explained that commercially sensitive negotiations were ongoing with McCarthy and Stone who wished to use part of the car park whilst building their development in Hunstanton. He referred to the undertaking given to Hunstanton that the funding received from the negotiations would be spent in Hunstanton. He stated he was keen to mitigate any effects the building process would have on the town.

Councillor Pitcher asked if the number of disabled parking spaces on the car park would still be available to those visiting the Princess Theatre. Councillor Beales confirmed that the number of disabled parking bays would not change. In response to a question from Councillor Bubb, it was explained that the build would be a 12 month project.

vi) **Councillor Lord Howard – Special Projects**

Councillor Lord Howard presented his report and told members there should be a further line of "still to be completed" in his report.

Councillor Mrs Watson passed on her congratulations on the appearance of the Saturday Market Place since refurbishment. Councillor Howard agreed to pass those congratulations on to those involved.

vii) **Councillor B Long – Environment and Deputy Leader**

Councillor Long presented his report. Councillor Mrs Collop asked why it had taken so many weeks to get the refuse collection days back to normal. Councillor Long explained that it depended when Christmas

and Boxing Day fell in the week and that this year and next fell so that it put the collections back by several days. The alternative would be to bring the collections forward but that would mean that those who hadn't realised it was early would miss out altogether. The changes in days had been well advertised to ensure people were aware of the changes.

Councillor Mrs Collop also asked if the promised visit to the new recycling facilities at Costessey would be able to take place soon. Councillor Long explained that having recently spoken to NEWS about groups of visitors to the site, they had informed him that it would be difficult to accommodate visitors with the new equipment in the building, however they were making a film of the processes which would soon be available for Councillors to see, and be available on line.

Councillor Manley asked whether there had been an increase in the rejection rate of recycling with the new plant now in operation, and if so whether another leaflet identifying what could be recycled would be a good option. Councillor Long informed Members that the new plant was still in its commissioning phase, but the figures were approximately the same. Extra conveyors were being added to enable rejected recycling to be re-run through the system for a second time, things such as the recycling being put into bags, or squashed into boxes caused issues as always, and the new member of staff employed to promote the recycling would address that. More information on the figures should be available in a few months. He also informed Members that NEWS were looking to promote the Plant as a show piece in the UK.

Councillor Bird asked if the new member of staff would also look at the issue of holiday homes leaving their bins in the street. Councillor Long commented that the new recruit would be promoting the waste service including what information was available to holiday homes.

Councillor McGuinness asked if there had been any discussions with the waste contractors on the delivery of refuse bags to those areas not provided wheelie bins. Councillor Long explained that he had not held those discussions directly as officers had held them with the contractors, but he would ensure it was raised.

Councillor Morrison asked if Councillor Long was able to comment on the proposal by the County Council to introduce a charge for the use of the smaller recycling centres such as Heacham and Docking. Councillor Long confirmed that was the information he was aware of, and was concerned about the potential increase in fly tipping resulting from the charges. He commented that the Environment Development and Transport Committee at the County Council had approved it, but that the Conservative Members had voted against it.

viii) Councillor N J Daubney – Leader

Councillor Daubney presented his report. Councillor Collop asked the same question as he did of Councillor Pope referring to the old car parks promotions budget of £200,000 which appeared to come under a different name of Town Centre Promotions with a budget of £150,000. He asked for detail on the budgets and how they had been spent and why the name and amount had been changed from previous years. Councillor Daubney explained that the initiatives undertaken within the budget began through the consultation undertaken with the town centre traders to encourage footfall into the town during the recession. He commented that King's Lynn had fared well during the recession and footfall figures were doing very well. He commented that the more activity that could take place in the town centre the more vibrant it would be. He drew attention to the festivals held in the town such as the Hanse, Lights, Festival Too, the Festival, which added to the vibrancy.

Councillor A Tyler asked if the Hanseatic Business links was showing results for local businesses. Councillor Daubney confirmed that a lot of interest had been shown in the Hanse Business Network. He reminded Members that a Board had been formed for the promotion of Businesses within the Hanse, of which he was a Member. The Membership of it had increased from 3 or 4 to 108 in Northern Europe, and King's Lynn now had 10 members who were actively developing their European market. He also reminded Members that King's Lynn was hosting a major overseas conference in May linked with the Network, which he hoped would be a successful event. He commented that the proof of the success of the network would be in the outcomes from it.

Councillor Foster made reference to a statement by Councillor Daubney to the Planning Committee regarding the fact he wouldn't have become a Councillor if he didn't want to help people, he asked if he would help people by not applying what Councillor Foster termed as pre determined policy on the major housing development. Councillor Daubney responded that it was not pre determined.

Councillor Foster also asked if he would comment on the fact that Councillor Long had not supported a proposal to sell the Willows Site to the Borough Council at a County Council meeting. Councillor Daubney said he would not.

Councillor J Collop, in referring to the presentation on pest control at the Regeneration Environment and Community Panel asked what control over price and standard of service the Council had over the contractor carrying out pest control listed on the web site. Councillor Daubney explained that there was constant monitoring of the standard

of service given by the supplier who met the criteria required as an assurance to customers.

Councillor Howman asked if Councillor Daubney was happy with the Council Tax collection figures, bearing in mind the Council Tax support scheme. Councillor Daubney confirmed that the collection rates were fairly good but they were monitored to see the effects of the scheme.

Councillor Tilbury asked how many people from the business community attended the recent Town Centre Partnership meeting, as opposed to the Council, Police County and DWP representatives. He explained that he wouldn't want the Council to re-submit a BID ballot for the same thing to happen as with the last ballot, through lack of enthusiasm by the business sector. Councillor Daubney confirmed that there had been occasions when those statutory representatives outnumbered the businesses, but the Council was anxious that the Body was private sector led, and it was fortunate that the leaders of the Partnership were keen to develop the idea. The current Chairman was putting a lot of work into it, and at the last meeting the attendance was approximately 50/50. He reminded Members that should the BID ballot be re-run, it was a decision of the traders, not the Council.

Councillor A Tyler, in referring to Councillor Daubney's membership of the College of West Anglia (COWA) Board as a Council representative asked him about the standard of performance of the College. Councillor Daubney confirmed that Colleges were also subject to Ofsted inspections, and COWA was performing very well despite the problems with the condition of the buildings on the campus over the recent years. He referred to the partnership working the Council had entered into to provide the world class technology block for the College. Work would be continuous to aim to improve in order to provide good education which in turn helped to produce a vibrant economy.

Councillor Tilbury made reference to the renewal of bus passes which used to be carried out in King's Court, but was now carried out by the County Council centrally. He had looked into the different places to go to renew other than County Hall, and there were no places on offer in West Norfolk, which he felt was a considerable inconvenience to the people of West Norfolk. He asked if it was because the Borough had refused to co-operate with the County or vice versa. Councillor Daubney responded that he had raised it with the County previously and been told it could be done on line. The situation was not because the Borough was refusing to co-operate, in fact he had witnessed first hand staff in the CIC assisting people with their on line applications. He undertook to find out what the situation was.

C76: **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

Councillor Mrs Spikings asked Councillor Foster who had chaired the Cabinet Scrutiny meeting on 14 November whether he had gone back to that Committee and update them with the correct figures on traffic information he had quoted during the debate on the Local Development Framework item considered. Councillor Foster responded that those minutes were not being considered at this meeting so he would not be responding.

C77: **CABINET: 2 DECEMBER 2014**

It was proposed by Councillor Daubney, and seconded by Councillor Long that the recommendations from the meeting on 2 December 2014 be approved.

CAB114: Updates Of : Freedom Of Information; Environmental Information Policy; Data Protection Act Policy And The Publication Scheme was agreed without debate.

With regard to **CAB116: Council Tax Support Scheme For 2015/16**, Councillor J Collop made reference to the levels of support in other authorities which were higher than the Borough's, drawing particular attention to those of North Norfolk which had an older population. He commented that he felt that the people of West Norfolk were being asked to pay more money to support the other organisations such as the County Council or the Police than other authorities. With the required number of supporters, he asked for a recorded vote on the item once the debate had completed.

Councillor McGuinness, in supporting the comments made by Councillor Collop, reminded Members that the service the people in the West of the County received from the County Council had been demonstrated this evening as worse than others in the County whilst the Borough was subsidising it. He commented that self employed people often didn't earn the minimum wage and found it difficult to find the extra money to pay that required under the scheme.

Councillor Beales stated that it was a difficult report and recommendation to decide upon, but that it was the cost of supporting the most vulnerable and needy that produced the levels proposed. He reminded Members that those most vulnerable, elderly, those with small children etc had been protected in the scheme, but because of the age profile of the Borough, the proposal walked a fine line in doing so.

Councillor Daubney commented that the argument of the levels set by other authorities did not compare like with like, as North Norfolk may have an older population, but as well as an older population West Norfolk also had a large number of families with small children. Those

vulnerable groups were all protected under the proposed scheme, and the Council had done the best thing it could do which was keep the overall costs down as much as possible which it had done in having one of the lowest Council tax figures in the country trying to make the fairest scheme possible.

A recorded vote was taken on the proposed recommendation:

For	Against	Abstain
B Ayres	J Collop	R Bird
L Bambridge	S Collop	A Bubb
R P Beal	G Howman	
A Beales	C Joyce	
J Collingham	G McGuinness	
C Crofts	L Scott	
N Daubney	A Tyler	
P Foster	M Wilkinson	
G Hipperson		
M Hopkins		
M Chenery of Horsbrugh		
G Howard		
M Howland		
H Humphrey		
A Lawrence		
J Leamon		
B Long		
J Loveless		
A Lovett		
T Manley		
C Manning		
K Mellish		
A Morrison		
E Nockolds		
M Peake		
M Pitcher		
D Pope		
C Sampson		
V Spikings		
M Storey		
J M Tilbury		
D Tyler		
G Wareham		
E Watson		
D Whitby		
Mrs A Wright		
S Young		
37	8	2

The recommendation was carried.

With regard to **CAB117: The Wash East Coastal Management Strategy**, Councillor R Bird spoke against the proposal to create a Community Interest Company (CIC) to obtain voluntary contributions towards the flood defense work along the South Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek area of the coastline.

Councillor Bird drew attention to the fact that in January the County Council had not supported the proposals and referred to the potential difficulties in enforcing the payment of the contributions which would be made voluntarily, lack of business plan, lack of knowledge of the prospective audience, no audit of potential levy payers or occupancy ranging from 6-12 months and no understanding of the new tax rules to be introduced in January.

He recommended that the way forward would be to continue with a charitable company on an interim basis with the condition that the relevant authorities go onto the controlling board until the best type of company to take advantage of the new tax rules was established. He also recommended that the funds be put in reserve to counter any shortfall of the company, and to establish in law the ability to enforce the payment of the levy.

Councillor Long explained that the County Council was not the responding authority to the proposals, but their members had misunderstood the proposals. He highlighted that there was a change in how flood defense was managed nationally, and previously funding had been received through grants. Considerable public consultation had taken place on the proposals.

Councillor Long made reference to the fact that the tax rules had changed which now permitted businesses who contributed to obtain tax benefits, confirmation of which had been received from HMRC. He also made reference to letters of support received from the person leading on the development of the CIC, and Anglian Water, both of whom were stakeholders. All current legislative routes had been checked to see if they could be used, and any new legislative proposal would take a considerable amount of time to come to fruition. He commented that if the way forward was not supported, it would jeopardise the works to be done to the area in before next winter. He urged Members to support the proposals.

Councillor Daubney endorsed the comments from Councillor Long.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was approved.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 2 December 2014 be adopted

C78: **CABINET: 13 JANUARY 2015**

It was proposed by Councillor Daubney, and seconded by Councillor Long that the recommendations from the meeting on 13 January 2015 be approved.

With regard to **CAB126: Council Tax Discounts For Second Homes And Empty Properties**, Councillor J Collop suggested that the recommendation should ensure that the consultation with “ward Member/s”. **This proposal was agreed.**

With regard to **CAB128: Planning Obligations And Affordable Housing - Implications Of The Recent Government Announcement On Revised Thresholds**, Councillor Beales and Spiking left the room during consideration of the item. Councillor Joyce drew attention to the fact that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee at its meeting had proposed an amendment to the recommendations as follows:

“That recommendation 1.b. should be amended to read:

b. For all remaining settlements apply a threshold of 5 units *above which* a financial contribution will be sought towards affordable housing rather than on site provision as is currently the case.”

This amendment was accepted and so then formed part of the substantive motion. **The amended recommendation was agreed.**

The following items were agreed without debate:

CAB127: Homelessness Strategy 2015-19

CAB129: Pension Fund – Employer’s Policy Statement

RESOLVED: That the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 2015, as amended above, be adopted

C79: **CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 22 JANUARY 2015**

The recommendation from the meeting held on 22 January 2015 on CAB128: Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing - Implications of The Recent Government Announcement on Revised Thresholds had been dealt with above.

C80: **PROPORTIONALITY**

Following changes to Group memberships since the last Council meeting, a revised proportionality table was presented.

Councillor Wareham objected to the proposals on the grounds that he felt that the new UKIP and Independent Group had usurped the name of the truly Independent Members, and he questioned the fact that an Independent Member would want to be in the same Group as UKIP as he felt those Members who had changed groups in such a way should explain it to their constituents.

Councillor Beales stated that he could not support the proposal set out in the report because whilst individual Councillors often changed Groups because of personal reasons, change of political leaning or simple personality differences, the new group would be primarily composed of Councillors elected under a different political grouping, this he felt did not properly respect democracy or the electorate. Councillor Beales explained that he was not encouraging others to vote against as a decision had to be taken, but he was not able to support it.

Councillor Tilbury stated that he hoped Members would vote for the proposal as the Council was obliged to ensure proportionality in the interests of tidiness and legitimacy.

Councillor Joyce reminded Members that the report only referred to the proportional bodies, of which Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was not one and there were no changes proposed to that Committee.

RESOLVED: That proportionality be amended in accordance with the table attached to the agenda and the appropriate membership sought.

The Meeting closed at 8.35 pm