

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

**CABINET**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Tuesday, 4 September 2012 at 5.30pm in the Committee Suite, King's  
Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Long (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)  
Councillors A Beales, A Lawrence, Mrs E Nockolds,  
D Pope and Mrs V Spikings.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N J Daubney  
(Chairman) and Lord Howard.

CAB67: **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the Meetings held on 31 July and  
21 August 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the  
Chairman.

CAB68: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

CAB69: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

CAB70: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

CAB71: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

None

CAB72: **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

CAB73: **FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

The forward decision list was noted.

CAB74: **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i) **Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel Meeting: 29 August 2012**

The Panel made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were taken into account when Cabinet considered the report.

REC56: Cabinet Report: Regeneration And Economic Development Policy

RESOLVED: That the Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below:

- 1) That Cabinet be invited to appoint a 9 Member Task Group to consider regeneration and economic development policy and the associated deliver framework (9 Members – 6 Conservative, 2 Labour, 1 Independent/Green Party or Liberal Democrat).
- 2) That Cabinet agrees the attached Terms of Reference for the Member Task Group.

REC58: Cabinet Report: King's Lynn Enterprise And Innovation Centre (KLIC)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet as set out the report.

- 1) That Cabinet agrees in principle to allocate £2.5m in the capital programme 2012-2015 towards the capital cost of building KLIC.
- 2) That Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Commercial Services to negotiate the terms and conditions of £2.5m loan from New Anglia Growing Places Fund.
- 3) That Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Commercial Services to negotiate the terms and conditions of a Partnership Agreement with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) for the construction and running of the centre.
- 4) That a report be brought to the Cabinet Meeting on 2 October 2012 setting out the final recommendations and outcome of the negotiations.

**CAB75: REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

Councillor Beales presented a report which explained that the current Urban Development Strategy was developed in 2006 and based on a set of economic and financial premises, which were no longer valid as a result of the 2008 economic recession. The recession had brought up a series of financial and economic challenges at national and local level for both the private and public sectors. In light of these challenges, the Borough Council needed to reconsider existing regeneration and economic development policy and its delivery approach to address the new economic, financial and social circumstances.

The report outlined a proposed structure and mechanism for the development of Borough Council Regeneration and Economic Development Policy through a proportionate Member Task Group which would work within and look at the general principles below:

- Strategic overview – the general approach would be pragmatic and market based with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) providing planning guidance and safeguards in terms of proposed site developments in the borough. Some exceptional areas such as the principal gateways into King's Lynn and the waterfront would be considered separately with a design brief worked up for those areas
- Council intervention – the Council may decide to use its resources to intervene in certain areas where the private market would not deliver suitable outcomes
- Public finance – any finance used to intervene needed to seek and achieve a return on capital (even if long term)
- Project delivery – given scarcity of resources project proposals and initiatives (whether residential, commercial or mixed use) needed to be prioritised in relation to the wider development and investment context

The Terms of Reference of the Task Group were contained within the report and approved.

Councillor Beales drew attention to the good debate which had ensued at the Regeneration Environment & Community Panel which had supported the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That officers be instructed to seek membership of a 9 Member Task Group to consider regeneration and economic development policy and the associated delivery framework (9 Members – 6 Con, 2 Lab, 1 Ind/Gr or Lib Dem)

- 2) That the Terms of Reference for the Member Task Group, attached to the agenda be agreed.

CAB76: **OUTSOURCED PAYROLL CONTRACT**

Becky Box, Personnel Services Manager presented a report which explained that in 2006 the Council took the decision to outsource payroll processing.

Following a full OJEU tendering exercise the contract was awarded to Bedford Borough Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. The contract for this service terminates on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 and therefore it was necessary to re-tender the provision of this service. The new contract would commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. In accordance with the Council's contract standing orders, as the total value of the outsourced payroll contract exceeded £250,000 it would be necessary to obtain Cabinet approval for the successful provider once identified through the tendering exercise.

The report set out the overview of the detailed project timetable which had been developed to ensure that the new payroll arrangements would be in place and fully tested prior to the 'go live' date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. This was essential to ensure that the service, and any potential change in supplier, was delivered seamlessly.

This report outlined the re-tendering exercise and key decisions that will be made during the process.

**RESOLVED:** That the steps involved in the tender process be noted and a report be submitted to the October Cabinet meeting on the outcome of the tender process.

CAB77: **REVISIONS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING INVESTMENT POLICY**

Duncan Hall, Strategic Housing and Community Safety Manager presented a report which detailed a number of proposed changes to the grants and loans that the Council made available for adapting the homes of disabled people and essential housing repairs for vulnerable households.

He explained that the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) involved a very prescribed and time consuming process. A new grant was proposed as an alternative to the DFG regime (in some but not all cases). The introduction of a new grant called 'ADAPT' would remove any unnecessary bureaucracy and as a consequence increase the speed at which the applications could be approved and delivered.

The report also proposed other changes which involved targeting existing resources to ensure the most vulnerable were assisted in circumstances where housing conditions represented a hazard to health.

In commending the report Councillor Lawrence reminded Members that the proposals saved time, made the money go further and enabled officers to get the help to those who were in greatest need faster.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds asked whether the levels for the safe and secure grant were up to £250. It was confirmed this was the case. Councillor Mrs Nockolds also asked whether there were timescales set to get specific jobs done under the grants scheme. It was confirmed that there were targets set but with the existing scheme these were not always met. It was hoped that the new scheme would improve times taken.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the introduction of the ADAPT grant for all applications for adaptations under £6,000, where the applicant is not subject to a means-test be supported, and the changes to the grants and loan assistance as documented within the revised Private Sector Housing Investment Policy attached in Appendix A be approved.

CAB78: **HMO AND OTHER PRIVATELY RENTED HOMES – AMENITY STANDARDS**

Duncan Hall, Strategic Housing and Community Safety Manager presented a report which proposed a set of common standards in respect of the regulation of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), and other privately rented dwellings. It focused on standards of HMOs as they clearly represented the highest risk of harm if not properly managed and maintained. These common standards complemented the Council's existing HMO Licensing Policy agreed in April 2006. The report reminded Cabinet that Housing authorities had a duty to ensure that the HMOs within their areas met certain minimum standards. National standards had been produced with a requirement that they were considered and interpreted locally. The document represented a set of standards appropriate to this area which would be a technical document for officers to refer to and Landlords to take note of.

In commending the report to Members Councillor Lawrence reminded Members that it was important to ensure that the people who lived in HMOs were kept as safe as possible in their housing.

Councillor Beales in commending the standards as a positive step to enable HMOs to be judged by tenants, asked how in practice the standards would be enforceable or those unregistered properties' landlords encouraged to comply. Duncan Hall explained that it was about raising awareness, and reminded Members that where there were worsening conditions, the Housing Act did enable an extension of the types of property to be covered in the scheme, and there were

other enforcement tools which could be used. Councillor Beales also commented that if there was an uptake in licensed premises complying with the standards, market forces would involve a greater demand for those properties. It was confirmed that at present demand for rented premises outstripped supply, and some rogue landlords did exploit tenants, but the Government were looking at that aspect and had just (31 August) published some guidance to Council's on dealing with Rogue Landlords. In response to a question from Councillor Pope it was confirmed that a range of measures could be used to rectify problems to avoid prosecution or other sanctions.

Councillor Long commented that some of the people living in the properties were the most vulnerable in society so it was important to ensure robustness of the enforcement.

**RECOMMENDED:** That a common set of amenity standards to be applied to HMOs and other privately rented homes across King's Lynn and West Norfolk be adopted.

CAB79: **LOCALISM ACT HOUSING REFORMS – THE COUNCIL'S TENANCY STRATEGY**

Duncan Hall, Strategic Housing and Community Safety Manager presented his report which explained that all registered providers of social housing must give regard to the Local Authority Tenancy Strategy appropriate to the areas where they managed stock. It was therefore important that registered providers locally were given some direction to guide their policies, and the report provided a starting point for that.

The Tenancy Strategy proposed set out in very broad terms the Councils approach to a number of new housing reforms contained within the Localism Act 2011. Whilst the Local Authority Tenancy Strategy was not statutorily required until Jan 2013 it was important that the Councils direction on these matters was understood as soon as possible as some of the new flexibilities were likely to be used by registered providers of social housing operating in the area from April 2012. Cabinet's attention was drawn to the Equality impact Assessment which considered categories of households that could suffer disproportionately as a result of the flexible tenancies. The Strategy set out that flexible tenancies should not be used for some categories of tenants.

Councilor Beales commented that it was a difficult area of policy to set and the reference to vulnerable groups was particularly important. Housing was a precious resource and those who really need it should be able to access it. Councillor Long concurred and stated that where circumstances changed then it should be reflected in changes of tenancy.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Tenancy Strategy document attached as an appendix to the report be adopted.

CAB80: **RECONSTITUTION OF THE KING'S LYNN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

Councillor Long presented the report which explained that The King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board had decided to reduce their overall membership from 31 to 21. The knock on effect for the Borough was a reduction in representation from 15 Members to 10. Cabinet was invited to endorse the proposed reduction and invite Council to make the amended appointments.

Councillor Spikings asked whether the Member from Fenland District Council was attending the meetings. It was confirmed that they had been present at the last meeting.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Council's Membership of the King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board be reduced from 15 to 10 Members and those members be decided at the Council meeting on 27 September 2012.

CAB81: **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – NEXT STAGE**

Cabinet received a report which explained that the second consultation period (as per the Terms of Reference) for the ongoing Community Governance review closed on 20 July 2012. Residents and interested organisations had the opportunity to comment further on the decisions made by Council at its meeting on 21 June regarding the suggestions put forward from three Parish Councils for amendments to parish boundaries. The correspondence received was considered by the Cabinet. The Chief Executive reminded Members that it was not proposed to endorse a boundary change which was not supported by both parishes involved such as the Castle Rising/Congham review.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the draft proposals be approved for the current stage of the process with the exception of the Castle Rising/Congham proposal.

CAB82: **EXCLUSION OF 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act."

**CAB83: KING'S LYNN ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION CENTRE**

Ostap Paparega, the Regeneration Manager presented his report which outlined the proposal to build an Enterprise and Innovation Centre in King's Lynn. It set out the rationale, funding structure and delivery mechanism for the construction and operation of the centre. The Borough Council's Corporate Business Plan 2011-2015 identified support for enterprise and business start-ups as a top priority. The proposal to deliver an enterprise and innovation centre in King's Lynn met both a council key priority and the need to fill the gap in business support provision left after Business Link demise.

The recommendations were for an "in principle" agreement for the allocation of the funding in order to permit negotiations to continue.

Councillor Beales drew attention to the constructive discussion held on the matter at the Regeneration Environment and Community Panel.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That in principle approval be given to allocate £2.5m in the capital programme 2012-2015 towards the capital cost of building KLIC.

2) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to negotiate the terms and conditions of £2.5m loan from New Anglia Growing Places Fund.

3) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to negotiate the terms and conditions of a Partnership Agreement with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) for the construction and running of the centre.

4) That a report be brought to a future Cabinet Meeting setting out the final recommendations and outcome of the negotiations.

**The Meeting closed at 6.08 pm**