

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on
Tuesday, 7 May 2013 at 5.30pm in Meeting Rooms 1, 2 and 3,
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

PRESENT: Councillor N J Daubney (Chairman)
Councillors A Beales, Lord Howard, A Lawrence, B Long, Mrs E Nockolds,
D Pope and Mrs V Spikings.

CAB209: **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 April 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB210: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

CAB211: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

CAB212: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

CAB213: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor J Moriarty – Item 10 i
Councillor Mrs E Watson – Item 10 ii
Councillor J Loveless – Item 10 iii

CAB214: **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

CAB215: **FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

The Forward Decision List was noted.

CAB216: **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i) **Resources and Performance Panel – 23 April 2013**

There were no comments from the Panel.

ii) **Regeneration, Community and Environment Panel – 24 April 2013**

The Panel made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were dealt with when Cabinet considered the reports on the agenda:

REC161: Proposed Enhancements To The Spinney, Hunstanton

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

That Cabinet:

- (1) Authorise Regeneration and Economic Development to commission the Norfolk Strategic Partnership to implement the scheme with the existing allocation in the capital programme.
- (2) Delegated authority granted to the Legal Services Manager to complete the necessary legal documentation required in order to implement the scheme.
- (3) Delegated authority granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to agree the final scope of works and costs associated.
- (4) Subject to recommendation in 3, rephrase the capital programme in the next monitoring report to Cabinet to facilitate completion of the scheme in 2013/14.

REC163: Tuesday Market Place

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel make the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- (1) The standard parking layout 195 spaces be used.
- (2) That the size of spaces as 2.5m wide be confirmed.
- (3) That the use of S106 funding for market shelters be confirmed.
- (4) Additional funding of £50,000 to be added to the scheme to allow the extension of tegula blocks to the junction with St Nicholas Street.
- (5) Approve the overall scheme design and costs and delegate authority to the Executive Director, Commercial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Health and Well Being to implement the scheme.
- (6) Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Commercial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing to amend Car Parking Orders.

- (7) That additional bicycle parking be installed in close proximity to the Corn Exchange.

CAB217: **SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW**

Cabinet considered a report, presented by Duncan Hall, Strategic Housing and Community Safety Manager, which explained that the West Norfolk Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme had commenced in February 2004. The Allocations Policy for West Norfolk Homechoice was agreed by Cabinet on 13th January 2003 and by Full Council on 23rd January 2003.

The Allocations Policy was reviewed in 2008 and changes to it were agreed by Cabinet on 4th November 2008 and by Council on 27th November 2008.

The report explained that the Department of Communities and Local Government had issued a new Code of Guidance for Allocations on 29th June 2012 and this, combined with some of the measures contained in the Welfare Reform and Localism Acts, prompted a review of the current West Norfolk Homechoice Policy. The Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel meeting of 25th July 2012 agreed that the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy be subject to wider consultation with stakeholders.

Interested persons had been invited to comment on the proposed changes displayed on the Council's website and advertised within the Lynn News. Numerous stakeholders were invited to comment including the Housing Association partners to West Norfolk Homechoice, Social Services, the Health Authority, Probation, neighbouring District Councils and the organisations which supported housing accommodation in the Borough. The period of consultation ended on 5th November 2012.

At its meeting on 27th February 2013, the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel considered the responses to the consultation and supported the changes to the Allocations Policy contained in the report to be presented to Cabinet and recommended for adoption.

A summary of the proposed changes were:

- To prevent those who had sufficient resources to purchase or rent their own properties from coming onto the Register.
- Setting a 3 year local connection requirement.
- Giving preference to those applying to move where they are under occupying a property and to mitigate the effects of the changes in Housing Benefit.
- Giving preference to armed services personnel.
- Giving preference to prospective fosterers or adopters.
- For the avoidance of doubt where someone was deemed as homeless, by statute the local connection could be 6 months.

Councillor Daubney re-iterated the fact that preference would be given to those under occupying properties which could be released on the person moving to a smaller property.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Moriarty asked to what degree the delegation to make changes to the policy in the recommendation would extend, and whether people on the boundary of the Borough who had moved out of a village due to economic reasons, but still had local connections would be permitted onto the list.

In response Steve Dougall, Senior Housing Officer explained scenarios of cases which may be considered for admission to the list: such as someone having to move back to the area in order to be cared for by relatives; or someone securing a job in the Borough, with children with special needs who needed assistance from family members in the Borough to care for them. Each case would have to be considered on its merits.

In response to the point regarding changes to the policy, Councillor Lawrence explained that any potential changes could be made depending on what came to light requiring amendment. He reiterated it would be Officers in consultation with Members making those changes.

Councillor Mrs Spikings expressed support for the additional point in relation to disregarding any compensation payments made for members of the armed forces in financial assessments.

By way of clarification Cabinet agreed the following amendment to 2.1.1 of the report:

“2.1.1 - remove the existing sentence and replace with the following:

2.1.1 Those whose annual earned income, savings and equity in any property total more than one third of the average suitable property price in West Norfolk will not be admitted to the housing register unless there is an overwhelming welfare need.

2.1.3 - add the following after the first sentence:

Those that are in priority need and the Council owes or will owe a duty to because they are homeless or their homelessness is inevitable, will also be considered to have a local connection.”

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the proposed changes to the West Norfolk Homechoice Allocations Policy are adopted with the addition of the attached wording for clarification purposes:

“2.1.1 - remove the existing sentence and replace with the following:

2.1.1 Those whose annual earned income, savings and equity in any property total more than one third of the average suitable property price in West Norfolk will not be admitted to the housing register unless there is an overwhelming welfare need.

2.1.3 - add the following after the first sentence:

Those that are in priority need and the Council owes or will owe a duty to because they are homeless or their homelessness is inevitable, will also be considered to have a local connection.”

2) That the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for housing is delegated authority to make minor amendments to this Policy.

CAB218: PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS TO THE SPINNEY, HUNSTANTON

Councillor Beales presented a report which explained that the Hunstanton Town Centre & Southern Seafront Masterplan (2008) had identified the potential to create a Town Square to provide a focal point for the town centre. Since the adoption of the Masterplan in 2008, the focus of regeneration had been on the Seafront. The Hunstanton Town Centre and Southern Seafront Project Team recommended, in light of the current issues facing town centres nationwide, the focus of current regeneration investment should be on the town centre.

Hunstanton's town centre served local residents and neighbouring villages and the visitors that flocked to Hunstanton during the busy summer season. However, in addition to the problems facing town centres nationwide, Hunstanton's seasonal economy meant the town centre noticeably contracted out of the peak season. While Local Authorities could not control the provision of retailers, it could support the town centre through 'place making' by providing an attractive environment and spaces for activities and events to take place to attract people to the town centre and in turn stimulate private sector investment. The enhancements to the Spinney were proposed to meet these objectives.

The brief to develop the enhancements scheme at the Spinney was developed by the Hunstanton Regeneration Project Team in consultation with the Hunstanton Town Team and the Town Council. The proposals were subject to a wide range of consultation, to which many comments were received, many constructive, some expressing concern about the removal of 6 trees which had been identified as a health and safety risk.

Councillor Beales explained that he had spoken at a number of meetings in Hunstanton on the subject, and made it clear that a number of trees would be re-planted on the site, and those being removed would permit the existing trees to flourish. The proposal would tie together the town centre streets, and was a factor in the development of the old garage site in the town. Councillor Beales also reported that the feedback received from the Le Strange Estate was supportive, although formal approval was still awaited.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Mrs E Watson addressed Cabinet in support of the proposals and what they would bring to Hunstanton, linking the High Street, Westgate and Le Strange Terrace with a beautiful useable space. The area would also enhance the views for the new development on the garage

site, and others in the area. She had also spoken to the Le Strange Estate who had indicated that they were happy with the arrangement.

Councillor Beales drew attention to the full and useful discussion on the item held at the Regeneration Environment and Community Panel.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager be authorised to commission the Norfolk Strategic Partnership to implement the scheme with the existing allocation in the capital programme.

2) That delegated authority be granted to the Legal Services Manager to complete the necessary legal documentation required in order to implement the scheme.

3) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration agree the final scope of works and costs associated.

4) That subject to recommendation in 3, the capital programme in the next monitoring report to Cabinet be rephased to facilitate completion of the scheme in 2013/14.

CAB219: TUESDAY MARKET PLACE

Councillor Beales presented a report which explained that the Council's Capital Programme included a scheme to regenerate and resurface the Tuesday Market Place in the 2013/14 financial year with a capital provision of £883,000.

The proposal for the Market Place had been subject to consideration by the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel as well as through a statutory consultation process undertaken by the County Council. In addition, specific consultation had been carried out with the King's Lynn Civic Society and English Heritage.

The scheme involved the pedestrianisation of the two roads to the east and the south of the Market Square, and the reduction of car parking spaces on the south side to create an area of public space. This produced an opportunity to create a 'café culture' for the market area and gave an open area for activity/ events/pop up market stalls or general use. A central premise of the arrangements was that they should allow all current activities taking place including The Mart, GEAR, Markets, Festival Too, Military Parades etc to continue in the future.

In considering the recommendations, Councillor Beales drew attention to the question of whether an additional £50,000 should be spent to allow for the extension of the tegula blocks to the junction with St Nicholas Street. He felt that not doing the work now would be regrettable as it would detract from the market place if that section of the road was topped with tarmac, and if it was decided to change it in the future, additional cost would be incurred. The Panel meeting had considered the matter and recommended that it be included.

With regard to concerns expressed about access to shops off the Market Place, the scheme included 21 spaces with 20 free minutes.

Two options had been considered for the new car parking layout, echelon or standard, Cabinet preferred the option of standard which gave 195 spaces as opposed to the 169. Chris Bamfield, Executive Director made reference to the point raised by Councillor Bubb at the Panel meeting regarding the number of spaces which could fit into the square in echelon layout, and confirmed that the figures provided by the County Council were correct.

Councillor Beales also drew attention to the additional recommendation suggested by the Panel regarding the siting of additional bicycle parking close to the Corn Exchange, which he supported.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds addressed Cabinet fully supporting the proposals which only reduced the car parking capacity by 50 spaces, which could be accommodated elsewhere in the town. She reminded Members that the electronic signs would be placed in the town to say where parking was available.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor J Loveless addressed Cabinet supporting the additional recommendation made by the Panel regarding the provision of bicycle parking at the Corn Exchange. He reminded Members that the number of people riding bicycles had increased and provision to park them safely was required.

Councillor Long endorsed the recommendations and in particular the pedestrian crossings which were being installed. The improvements to the car park surface would be a great improvement befitting such a market place.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the layout of parking spaces as standard 195 spaces be approved.

2) That the size of spaces as 2.5m wide be confirmed.

3) That the use of S106 funding for market shelters be confirmed.

4) That the additional funding of £50,000 be added to the scheme to allow the extension of tegula blocks to the junction with St Nicholas Street.

5) That the overall scheme design and costs be approved and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Commercial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Health and Well Being to implement the scheme.

6) That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Commercial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing to amend Car Parking Orders.

- 7) That additional bicycle parking be installed in close proximity to the Corn Exchange.

The Meeting Closed at 6.00pm