

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET ON 4TH MARCH 2014 FROM THE REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL MEETINGS HELD ON 29TH JANUARY 2014 AND 26TH FEBRUARY 2014

REC113: CABINET REPORT – REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLIICY TASK GROUP AND HERITAGE TASK GROUP REPORT

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager presented the report which would be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting in March 2014. The Panel was reminded that in November 2012 the Cabinet approved the creation of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group. Its main purpose was to review key areas of the Council's regeneration and economic development policy and make a series of recommendations to Cabinet in terms of future priorities and interventions. In February 2013 Cabinet had approved the creation of the Heritage Task Group and its main purpose was to provide a series of recommendations to Cabinet on how to preserve and enhance the cultural and historical assets of the area.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the recommendations as contained within the covering Cabinet report which were considered to be the common priority areas from each Task Group and included:

- The Waterfront area
- Gateways to King's Lynn
- Marketing for visitors and businesses
- Strengthening the viability and vitality of King's Lynn town centre.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager referred to recommendation four of the report which asked Cabinet to consider how marketing and heritage was reflected within the Cabinet portfolios.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager provided the Panel with an outline of the work carried out by the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group which included:

- Looking at existing policies and plans
- A site visit of King's Lynn
- Presentations from private sector representatives at two Task Group meetings.
- Presentations from officers of the council.
- Availability of external funding.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that he would present an update on the external funding opportunities available from the Local Enterprise Partnerships at a future meeting of the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel.

The Planning Control Manager explained that there had been a lot of cross over between the Heritage Task Group and the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group. The Heritage Task Group's work had focussed on the Heritage asset stream. At an early stage the Heritage Task Group had agreed to focus on King's Lynn's heritage and they looked at topical areas including:

- Southgates
- Railway Road
- Waterfront area

The Planning Control Manager referred those present to the recommendations made by the Heritage Task Group which had been appended to the covering report and how the recommendations had been prioritised into long and short term priorities.

The Chairman invited the Chairmen of the Task Groups to address the Panel.

The Chairman of the Heritage Task Group, Councillor Mrs Z Christopher presented the report of the Task Group which was included in the report at Appendix A. She explained that the Heritage Task Group had looked at various areas in King's Lynn including the Southgates, which she considered to be one of the best buildings in the town. She explained that access to the building was restricted because of the traffic flowing through it and highlighted that one of the long term priorities recommended by the Task Group was to divert the road around the Southgates. The Chairman of the Heritage Task Group referred to the "easy wins" which had been recommended by the task group which included landscaping and improving the approaches to the town centre such as Nar Ouse Way and Edward Benefer Way. The Task Group had also looked at the Waterfront area and had recommended that the area needed attention in the short term to improve its appearance.

The Chairman of the Heritage Task Group explained that the Council had sadly been outbid on the purchase of the silos site, but hoped that opportunities would still be available to the Council, for example retail space on the ground floor. She explained that the Task Group had also looked at the Sommerfield and Thomas site and felt that it was of crucial importance for the Council to acquire this site.

With regard to Railway Road, the Task Group had considered that some cosmetic work be carried out to improve the look of the area as it was an important gateway to the town centre.

The Chairman of the Heritage Task Group informed the Panel that the Task Group had investigated how the Borough was marketed to visitors and wider in the region. She felt that the heritage offer was the main attraction of King's Lynn and needed promoting. She felt that the

Council should dedicate more resources to conservation including a dedicated Portfolio Holder for Heritage.

The Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group was present at the meeting and presented the report of the Task Group which was included within the report at Appendix B. He commented that he agreed with the comments of the Chairman of the Heritage Task Group. He explained that the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group had looked at strategy and the economic situation of the Borough. He felt that it was obvious that the Borough needed a programme to promote economic activity in the Borough which in turn would make the economy more vibrant and bring in more wealth.

The Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group explained that the Task Group acknowledged that there was a lot of work to be done to market the area to visitors and to businesses and referred to the fact that there was not a dedicated Portfolio Holder for Marketing. He explained that other recommendations of the Task Group included dropping the Waterfront Regeneration as a priority project, redistributing the assets to assist with other projects and focussing on the Council's industrial estate portfolio and how it could be improved.

The Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group explained that the Task Group felt that the area needed to be promoted as an area to live in as well as a place to visit. The Task Group had also recommended investigating ways to navigate round the coast by boat as currently it was difficult to sail from King's Lynn to Brancaster in one tide.

The Chairman thanked the officers and the Chairmen of the Task Groups for attending the meeting and presenting the reports. The Chairman invited questions and comments from Members of the Panel, some of which are summarised below.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor Beales thanked the Chairmen of the Task Group for their report and thanked all Members and officers involved. He acknowledged that the report was a distilled version of the amount of work carried out by each of the Task Groups. He explained that the recommendations would need to be prioritised into easy wins due to the limited resources available.

With regard to the waterfront area, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration reiterated the comments made by the Chairman of the Heritage Task Group in that it was a shame that the Council had been unable to acquire the silos site as it was integral to the access of the Sommerfield and Thomas site. He explained that there was a possibility that the Council would be able to acquire some retail space on the ground floor of the development on the silo site.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that the Council would soon be involved in a peer challenge on heritage and tourism, so additional feedback on how the marketing offer could be improved would be available from this once it had been completed. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration reiterated the comments of the Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group in that he felt that there would be a benefit in investigating what opportunities were available with regard to the Industrial Estates Portfolio.

Councillor Mrs Collop asked for details of the Members involved in the Task Group. She was informed that minutes and agendas from both Task Groups were available for Councillors to view. The Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group explained that although the Task Group had a set membership, a lot of other members had been involved in the Task Group and all had been welcome to attend meetings of the Task Group.

Councillor Foster addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He welcomed the report but was concerned how the press had known so much about the work of the Task Group when the minutes of the meetings were not a public record. He was concerned that the press had information available to them before members of the Task Groups had had chance to comment on their final reports. He wasn't aware that Members of the Task Group had been offered the opportunity to comment on their respective reports and explained that he would be discussing the matter with the Chief Executive.

Councillor Pitcher supported the report, but reiterated concerns that the Task Group did not hold a final meeting to consider their report. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that the final versions of the reports had been emailed to Members of the Task Group for comments in advance of their publication. He reminded those present that the Task Groups did not have the power to make any decisions, their purpose was to make recommendations to the Cabinet.

Councillor Pitcher explained that he was a Member of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group and referred to the discussions the Task Group had held regarding Industrial Estates. He felt that a lot of the industrial units were old and there could be opportunities to demolish and rebuild more modern units. He felt that this would be a good investment for the Council and not too costly as all utilities would already be in place.

Councillor D J Collis welcomed the report and felt that it was important for the recommendations to be prioritised by Cabinet. He asked for an update on the progress with the Enterprise Centre. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration updated the Panel and reminded them that they had previously considered a report to approve additional

remediation work to the car parking area to ensure that there was no subsidence. The contract with the Local Enterprise Partnership had now been signed and the contract with the joint partners would be signed soon. Following the signing of the contracts the design brief would go out to tender and a constructor would be appointed to carry out the ground works. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that if everything went to plan, work could commence on site in the autumn.

Councillor Mrs Collingham explained that she was a Member of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group and felt that she would like to see more emphasis in the report on the provision of living accommodation in the town centre, for example the use of flats above shops.

Councillor Mrs Collop referred to the financial implications as set out within the report and asked how many additional staff would be needed and the cost. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that this was speculative and the purpose of the initial report was to set out broad recommendations. Cabinet would then decide on how they would be developed. Detail on any proposals would then be brought back for Cabinet approval.

The Chief Executive referred to the Peer Review. He explained that the review would be led by the Chief Executive of Canterbury Council and the Peer Review Panel would be made up of a variety of senior officers and Members from other Local Authorities. The purpose of the review was to help the Council identify what more could be done for King's Lynn with regard to Heritage and Tourism. The Chief Executive welcomed the review and hoped that the level of expertise which the Council could draw on would help formulate plans for the future.

With regard to Marketing, the Chief Executive felt that the Council did already do a lot of work to promote the area and referred to the excellent Visit West Norfolk Website – www.visitwestnorfolk.co.uk and the range of publications available locally and nationally including:

- Where to go and what to do in West Norfolk – over 200,000 issues circulated beyond West Norfolk.
- Discover King's Lynn leaflet, which promoted all the main heritage sites and events in King's Lynn – 110,000 copies had been distributed to over 700 locations in target markets.
- King's Lynn Maritime Trail, which was a 24 page booklet and 27 pavement way markers.
- King's Lynn Pilgrimage Trail
- The Hanseatic King's Lynn Walking Trail
- King's Lynn Heritage open day – the Borough Council designs, prints and arranges distribution of 6,000 programmes and 15,000 flyers.

The Chief Executive referred to the new signposting which had recently been installed around the town centre, and the information boards which were soon to be made available at the Railway Station. The Council were also investing in its Heritage offer and the Chief Executive referred to the recent installation of the Pontoons at South Quay, redevelopment of the Tuesday Market Place and future proposals to redevelop the Saturday Market Place, the Town Hall and St Margaret's and St Nicholas conservation area through the Townscape Heritage Initiative all which were substantial schemes for significant improvements.

The Chief Executive referred to the limited resources available to a mid-size council, the amount of government grant received and how it would need to look at other sources of funding including the Lottery Fund and Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Chief Executive explained that discussions would be held with Norfolk County Council on how they could assist the Borough Council through the Norfolk Infrastructure fund.

Councillor Smeaton asked if the Task Groups considered the Hillington Square area and was informed that as the area was already undergoing redevelopment it had not been considered by the Task Group.

In response to a question from Councillor Chenery of Horsburgh, the Chairman of the Heritage Task Group explained that the Task Group did not have chance to look at London Road, due to time constraints, but did focus on the Southgates.

The Chairman of the Regeneration and Economic Development Policy Task Group reminded those present that the reports from the Task Groups should be considered as the beginning of the thought process and could be developed by Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration reminded those present that unfortunately Council resources were limited so external investment was crucial.

The Chairman thanked officers and Members for their contributions.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Cabinet be asked to take into consideration the comments of the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel.
- (ii) The Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That the Cabinet:

1. Receives the reports of the two Member Task groups (Appendix A and B) and thanks both for their commitment and hard work.

2. Notes the common areas of priority identified by both groups and considers the issues raised within the content of the development of the Council's forward Corporate Business Plan:
 - a. Waterfront regeneration, including the area from Outer Purfleet to Nar Loop – assess feasibility and financial viability of proposals that can maximise this area's potential.
 - b. Improvements to main approaches/gateways to King's Lynn, including Southgates area.
 - c. Marketing the borough to business investors and visitors, including targeted campaigns on NORA and promoting King's Lynn as a heritage tourism product.
 - d. Working with key stakeholders in King's Lynn town centre to enhance the retail core area and historic built environment and attract businesses that will provide a wider range of higher quality shops.
3. Endorses the proposal to focus on these areas and instructs officers to prepare a further report to outline a strategy for each and to identify priorities for early action including:
 - a. Delivery of NORA infrastructure to unlock 13 ha of employment land with the potential to generate circa 1,000 jobs.
 - b. Review of the Council's commercial portfolio to identify opportunities to maximise its potential.
 - c. Delivery of a programme of environmental enhancements at key gateway routes into King's Lynn, particularly enhanced tree planting schemes along the Nar Ouse Way and in the Southgates area.
 - d. Provision of location maps at the train and bus stations, car parks and key places in King's Lynn showing not only tourist information but other key buildings.
4. Considers the recommendation from both groups in relation to the Marketing and Heritage areas within the Cabinet Portfolios.

REC131: **CABINET REPORT – NEW ANGLIA LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN AND THE WEST NORFOLK STRATEGIC ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN**

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager presented the Cabinet report which set out the aims, priorities and intervention packages of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Draft Strategic Economic Plan (2014-2026). By endorsing the draft Plan the Council would show its commitment to local economic development and collaboration with the LEPs.

He explained that in July 2013 the Government had announced growth deals between the Government and the LEP's. The growth deals were underpinned by two documents which were the five year Strategic

Economic Plan and the seven year EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

The Strategic Economic Plan included key priority areas for the LEP's and key intervention strategies which would be used as the basis for funding allocations under the Local Growth Fund.

The EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy included key funding and investment priorities to be funded from the Growth Programme, which included the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and a proportion of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The Growth Programme funding would be allocated locally by the LEPs and the Government had confirmed seven year notional allocations for each LEP.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained the consultation process for the New Anglia LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. Consultation had taken place with statutory organisations to refine the key priority sectors.

The Panel was referred to the New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan which was currently still in draft format. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that the Plan needed to be endorsed by the Council before the end of March so that it could be submitted to Government. He outlined the key priorities for intervention within the plan

- Enterprise and Innovation
- Green Pathfinder Economy
- Growth Locations
- Infrastructure
- Enabling Housing Growth
- Building a 21st Century workforce

The New Anglia LEP would ask for funding of £413.5million to cover the key priorities for the five year period. This allocation would need to be approved by Government.

The Panel was referred to a map of the area covered by the New Anglia LEP which showed the growth corridors and growth locations. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that the area was extremely competitive and therefore it was important for the Council to be in a position to bid for the funding once it was available. To this end, the Borough Council had produced the West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Investment Plan.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that the West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Investment Plan aligned the local economic growth priorities with the LEP's wider priorities and would assist in applying for funding from the Local Growth Fund and EU Growth Programme.

The Panel's attention was drawn to other potential funding streams available to the Council including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Horizon 20/20 etc.

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

The Chairman asked if a service would be available to assist small and medium sized enterprises to bid for funding as he appreciated that the process was complicated. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that each programme would have a Technical Secretariat which would provide guidance and explain the process, but would not be able to assist with the production of bids. He explained that when funding opportunities arose the Council would try and offer support as he appreciated that the process could be daunting and complicated to understand.

In response to a question from Councillor Chenery of Horsburgh, the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that the West Norfolk Holiday Guide was widely distributed outside of the Borough but acknowledged that there was always the opportunity to distribute the guide even further. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager referred to National advertising campaigns that the Borough Council had been involved in which included Rural Escapes and Seaside Resorts through the Visit England campaign. Norfolk had also been advertised through the ITV iPlayer.

Councillor Moriarty referred to the map of the New Anglia LEP Growth area and asked if West Norfolk would have trouble competing with other areas. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that the map showed the scale of the challenge and that bidding for funding from the Local Growth Fund and the EU Growth Fund was very competitive. He explained that within the GCGP LEP area, the top two centres of economic growth were the cities of Cambridge and Peterborough and that Peterborough had recently been identified as the fastest growing city in the Country.

Councillor Mrs Wright referred to point 2.1.4 of the West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Investment Plan which mentioned the coastal project. The Portfolio Holder for Environment explained that this was part of the Environment Agency project to bring together businesses and organisations into a Charitable Trust which would be used to replenish the sea defences.

Councillor Mrs Collingham asked how the need for housing growth had been identified. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that a forecasting model had been used which looked at employment and population trends. The Portfolio Holder for

Regeneration reminded those present that the Eastern region was economically one of the fastest growing regions in the EU.

The Chief Executive explained that the achievability of the housing growth would depend on the market forces. He referred to two major housing schemes which had been proposed for the Borough, which would achieve approximately 20% of the growth planned. He reminded those present that before the recession a lot of houses were being built in the Borough and it was hoped that this trend would resume as the economy recovered.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration referred to the recommendations contained within the report and explained that the Borough Council was one of the few Authorities who had put together their own strategic plan. The Plan would be beneficial when funding opportunities arose. He asked for comments on the draft documents from Members of the Panel.

Councillor Langwade asked how the Borough Council worked to attract new businesses to the area and if funding opportunities would be available for this. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that 70% of inward investment was generated locally. The Borough Council worked closely to support the businesses in the Borough and contacted them on a regular basis. The Council also received referrals from UK Trade and Investment who were responsible for inward investment into the UK. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that in the past twelve months approximately thirty inward investment enquiries had been received. Some of the enquires the Council were unable to respond to as the investor required a certain type of premises. The Borough Council would also be launching its own inward investment website in due course.

Councillor Langwade asked if the lack of availability of suitable premises was affecting the growth of the Borough. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration explained that the regeneration of NORA was one of the key priorities within the West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Plan.

Councillor Shorting asked if funds would be available to match fund any funding awarded from the LEP's. The Chief Executive explained that a package of funding would be required and the Council would seek other sources of potential funding as necessary. He referred to money available from the non-domestic business rates, second homes bonus etc. which could be potential sources of funding if required.

In response to a question from Councillor Crofts, the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that one of the strategic investment priorities of the West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Plan was to develop a workforce with the skills required

by a growing economy and this would include education. He reminded those present that the Council was involved in a number of initiatives relating to education, such as the University Centre and the tri-local authority partnership looking at addressing the imbalance between skills provision and skills demand from businesses, and raising the economic awareness of people in the labour market.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager informed the Panel that a recent survey of 16 to 19 year olds in East Anglia revealed that only 3% of young people would consider a career in advanced engineering and manufacturing when over 26% of the region's GDP came from the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector.

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

1. That Cabinet endorses New Anglia LEP's Draft Strategic Economic Plan.
2. That Cabinet approves the West Norfolk Strategic Economic and Infrastructure Investment Plan.