



Cabinet
Thursday, 23rd April, 2026 at 6.00 pm
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market
Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

Reports marked to follow on the Agenda and/or Supplementary Documents

1. **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES**
(Pages 2 - 13)

To receive any comments and recommendations from other Council bodies.

Regeneration and Development Panel – 31st March 2026

- Local Plan Task Group – Terms of Reference
- High Street Rental Auction
- Custom House Refurbishment

Environment and Community Panel – 14th April 2026

- South Lynn Community Centre
- Required Changes to the Existing Corporate Enforcement Policy and Financial Penalties Policy as a Result of the Renters Rights Act 2025
- Railway Road Extended Air Quality Management Area Revocation
- Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Corporate Performance Panel – 15th April 2026

- Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring

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Recommendations from the Regeneration and Development Panel held on 31st March 2026

RD96 **CABINET REPORT - LOCAL PLAN TASK GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing presented the report proposing updated terms of reference for the Local Plan Task Group, reflecting new government requirements, statutory changes, and the need for a more agile approach to plan-making.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing and officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel as summarised below.

The Chair expressed concern that the Local Plan Task Group had not been consulted on the proposed changes to the terms of reference and sought confirmation that the plan remained the Council's plan. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing confirmed it was still the Council's plan but noted that statutory deadlines and the risk of government intervention limited councillors' influence, requiring more frequent meetings and quicker decision-making.

Councillor Crofts asked about the implications of removing the statutory duty to cooperate. The Principal Planner explained that although the legal requirement had been removed, practical cooperation with neighbouring authorities was still necessary, statutory consultees still had to be engaged, and the need to demonstrate compliance to a planning inspector was now less stringent.

In response to a question from Councillor Blunt, the Principal Planner explained the new terms of reference would be flexible and dynamic to accommodate future changes such as the introduction of the mayoral authority.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryves, the Principal Planner confirmed that the plan would take account of the Environment Agency's suggested policy on wastewater treatment.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing clarified that the terms of reference had been drafted for the current circumstances and that the new Local Plan would be adopted by the new Unitary Council, not the existing Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Bone, the Principal Planner confirmed that they would be working closely with Breckland and other neighbouring authorities

throughout the process.

Councillor Bubb asked whether the new plan was expected to improve and enhance the existing plan. The Principal Planner confirmed that it would replace the current Local Plan.

In response to concerns raised by the Chair, the Principal Planner and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Licensing explained they were constrained by statutory deadlines and clarified that Councillors' views should not be ignored but government intervention and national policies may override local preferences requiring councillors to work smarter and to act quickly to influence the plan.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet resolves:

To adopt the revised Local Plan Task Group Terms of Reference (Annex 1 to the report).

RD97 **CABINET REPORT - HIGH STREET RENTAL AUCTION**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Portfolio Holder for People and Communities presented the report on High Street rental auctions and empty property initiatives, outlining the links between tackling empty retail and residential properties, the funding arrangements, and the operational approach.

The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection advised the Panel that the report related specifically to the High Street Rental Auction scheme, and that the empty property post was already underway and would be advertised shortly.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for People and Communities and officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel as summarised below.

Councillor Ryves asked why empty retail and residential property policies were linked. The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection, and the Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that both types of vacancies negatively affected the town's economic vitality and public perception, and that combining efforts would achieve a broader impact, including opportunities to repurpose space above shops for residential use.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Regeneration and Programmes Manager confirmed that funding from the Pride in Place programme and other partners would be available.

Councillor Bone commented that converting some empty properties to residential use made sense and stated that he welcomed the scheme.

In response to comments from Councillor Crofts, the Portfolio Holder for People and Communities explained that making empty residential properties and flats above shops habitable would help bring more people into the town to support local businesses and highlighted how the two approaches complemented each other.

In response to a question from Councillor Colwell, the Regeneration and Programmes Manager advised that they would provide the most up-to-date figures on void retail properties in the designated High Street rental auction area, using the quarterly survey data, after the meeting.

Councillor Collingham commented that it was disappointing the Debenhams site was excluded from the auction process. The Regeneration and Programmes Manager explained that the site's condition exceeded the reasonable standard required by legislation and added that alternative master planning and grant funding options were being explored for the property.

In response to comments from Councillor Ryves, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business explained that the auction process allowed flexible rental rates, enabling new businesses to trial premises at low cost.

In response to a question from Councillor Bubb, the Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection explained that several options existed for bringing empty domestic properties back into use, including Empty Dwelling Management Orders, which enabled the authority to take over management and recover costs through rent, and enforced sale where appropriate. It was explained that the Pride in Place programme would also explore the potential for a loan scheme to help landlords bring properties up to a standard where they can be let, subject to a future business case. The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection emphasised the need to understand why properties remained empty and to work with owners to address barriers or support the sale of properties to others able to bring them back into use.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection clarified that while the current focus was on King's Lynn due to high need and funding alignment, there was potential for the empty property officer's

work to be extended across the borough as data on vacancies was available.

The Chair commented that it would be good to have the work extended for empty residential properties outside of King's Lynn.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet to note the content of the report and agree to implement a High Street Rental Auction Scheme subject to following the national guidance in implementing such a scheme, to initially be applied to the southern section of King's Lynn High Street (appendix 1).

RD101 **CABINET REPORT - CUSTOM HOUSE REFURBISHMENT**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place presented the report on Custom House refurbishment as included in the Agenda.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel as summarised below.

Councillor Colwell raised concerns about the condition of Hanse House, noting that the Grade I listed building was affected by UPVC banners and bins. Councillor Colwell felt this was inappropriate and suggested that the owners should be engaged to ensure the area supported the wider ambitions for an improved waterfront. The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place confirmed he would speak with Councillor Colwell outside the meeting regarding the points raised.

The Panel agreed to move into closed session to consider the exempt sections of the report.

RD102 **EXCLUSION OF THE 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 it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RD103 **EXEMPT - CABINET REPORT - CUSTOM HOUSE REFURBISHMENT**

The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place responded to questions from Members relating to the exempt information contained within the report.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

Cabinet resolves:

1. To proceed with the Custom House element of the Riverfront Regeneration project based on the RIBA Stage 4 design.
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place to award the contract to deliver the Custom House Project (“the Main Contract”) to the successful tenderer, as identified through the completed procurement process within the approved budget as authorised.
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to approve material changes to the scope of the project and/or variations to the Main Contract that are within the approved budget and in accordance with the Local Assurance Framework for this project.

EC74 **CABINET REPORT - SOUTH LYNN COMMUNITY CENTRE**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Regeneration Programmes Manager presented the report as included in the agenda highlighting the key areas.

The Chair thanked the Regeneration Programmes Manager for the report and invited questions and comment from the Panel as summarised below.

In response to concerns raised from Councillors Kemp and Long, the Regeneration Programmes Manager confirmed that the building would remain available for community use, with the hall and community rooms continuing to be accessible for events and activities, and that the Trust would work with existing charities such as Little Discoverers and Headway to ensure continuity.

In response to a question from Councillor Long, the Environmental Health Manager agreed to confirm alternative premises for business continuity in case of emergencies.

Councillor Devulapalli raised questions about accessibility and the Regeneration Programmes Manager explained the centre was in better condition, had disabled access and was accessible in terms of walking and cycling with connected footpaths and direct bus routes.

Councillor Heneghan commented that the proposed location would be more accessible for residents and was appropriately situated. Councillor Heneghan added that the current site was not within a community hub, so accessibility was not considered to be an issue.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet resolves:

To approve that the Purfleet Trust be provided with a lease for the South Lynn Community Centre.

EC75 **CABINET REPORT - REQUIRED CHANGES TO THE EXISTING CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND FINANCIAL PENALTIES POLICY AS A RESULT OF THE RENTERS RIGHTS ACT 2025**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection presented the report as included in the agenda highlighting the key areas.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection for the report and invited questions and comment from the Panel as summarised below.

Councillor Long questioned the loss of local flexibility and potential impact on the rental market and the Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection confirmed that the Act mandates strict enforcement leaving little room for local discretion and that the Council must comply to avoid legal difficulties.

In response to further questions from Councillor Long regarding fines and tenant compensation, the Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection explained that civil penalties were retained by the Council to support enforcement, while tenants could seek compensation under the Act.

Councillor Ware asked about the appeals process for landlords and the Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection confirmed that landlords had the right to appeal penalties to the first-tier tribunal, which could amend or quash fines if appropriate. The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection confirmed further detail, including the appeals process for landlords under the Renters Rights Act, would be provided after the meeting.

Councillor Kemp requested a summary of the main changes under the Renters Rights Act. The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection referred the Panel to the tables within the report and reminded Members that there was a recording to a Member Briefing session on the Renters Rights Act.

The Chair stated that she supported the item but had some reservations based on discussions with landlords.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

It is recommended that in order to ensure that the council has a robust legally

compliant, and consistent approach to enforcement under the Renters' Rights Act, that Cabinet approve:

- 1) The inclusion of an addendum to the current Corporate Enforcement Policy.
- 2) The proposed Civil Penalty Policy.

EC76 **CABINET REPORT - RAILWAY ROAD EXTENDED AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA REVOCATION**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity presented the report for revoking the Railway Road Air Quality Management Area due to sustained improvements in nitrogen dioxide levels.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity for the report and invited questions and comment from the Panel as summarised below.

Councillor Long asked about the future of monitoring equipment. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that the main air quality monitoring stations would remain operational, while the number of diffusion tube locations had been reduced, resulting in annual savings of approximately £1,200.

Councillor Kemp raised concerns about the impact of planned housing growth and the need for ongoing monitoring. The Environmental Health Manager explained that major developments had been considered, air quality remained a material planning consideration and monitoring would continue to validate the revocation decision.

Councillor Kemp advised she would be abstaining on the item.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet resolves:

Revoke Railway Road Air Quality Management Area and revoke Railway Road Extended Air Quality Management Area.

EC77 **CABINET REPORT - CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube](#)

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity introduced the item and gave a presentation to the Panel, a copy which is attached.

The Climate Change Manager presented the report highlighting progress, ongoing challenges and new focus areas such as adaptation.

The Climate Change Manager advised that performance information would be reported to Cabinet quarterly, with an annual update on progress against the strategy and the carbon audits for both the Council and the wider borough. The Climate Change Manager added that updates could also be provided to the Panel, and that the document presented at the meeting would be redesigned into a more accessible format by the Communications team.

The Chair thanked the Climate Change Manager and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity for the report and invited questions and comment from the Panel as summarised below.

Councillor Kunes highlighted the importance of communicating available grants and free installations to residents.

Councillor Long raised concerns about the quality of ECO4 scheme installations and the need for scrutiny of outcomes and better use of local tradespeople.

Councillor Kemp inquired about the biodiversity corridor project and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity explained ongoing work under the pollinator strategy, the role of the Biodiversity Officer and efforts to improve green spaces and wildflower corridors in response to public consultation.

Councillor Devulapalli asked about engagement with farmers on peatland re-wetting with officers noting the complexity of land drainage systems, the need for coordinated projects, and the availability of national funding for landscape recovery and wetland creation. The Climate Change Manager advised they would investigate current funding opportunities for lowland peat restoration and inform Councillor Devulapalli of any relevant schemes to support local landowners.

Panel Members discussed the challenges of water scarcity, the need for new reservoirs, and the impact of increased housing targets on local resources and flood risk, with officers confirming ongoing studies and the importance of making representations to government regarding local constraints.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the

recommendation to Cabinet, as set out below.

That Cabinet approve the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

CP113

CABINET REPORT - QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Morley provided an introduction to the report, and the Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer highlighted a forecast surplus, increased general reserves, and key movements in revenue and capital budgets.

The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained that the forecast surplus for quarter three is £585,000, an improvement from the quarter two forecast of £383,000, mainly due to identified savings from vacant posts and recruitment processes, as detailed in Appendix A. The general fund reserve was forecast to reach £10.6 million by year-end, a significant improvement from previous predictions, attributed to the surplus and effective financial management. A minor last-minute amendment was made to the capital programme, with the updated budget for 2025-26 set at £40.3 million and 63% of this revised budget spent by the end of quarter three. The panel was informed that overdue debts, particularly those older than six months, were decreasing, and that the council's return on investments exceeded budget due to higher interest rates, despite lower than anticipated cash balances.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Morley outlined the addition of £30,000 to the capital programme for a feasibility study at South Lynn Fire Station, initiated by Councillor De Winton, with the aim of enhancing training facilities in collaboration with the Fire and Rescue Authority.

In response to a question from Councillor Osborne, the Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer clarified a robust review of earmarked reserves led to the creation of a new £3.77 million reserve for the capital programme.

The Vice – Chair, Councillor Blunt commented on the additional funding allocated for the local plan and enquired if the work had been quantified. The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained a contribution of £526,000 surplus from the 2024-25 revenue outturn was allocated to support the planning team in delivering the local plan, as agreed by Cabinet and Council. The planning service was actively seeking to reduce costs by delivering as much as possible in-house and leveraging work from the previous local plan cycle. The need for rapid delivery of the local plan was driven by central government, creating significant time pressure and necessitating additional funding.

The Chair, Councillor Long questioned the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates and the re-negotiation of the loan from Barclays. The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained The Borough Council repaid and closed two long-standing Barclays loans, achieving a discount of approximately £2 million, and replaced them with an £8 million loan from the Public Works Loan Board at a higher short-term interest rate. The decision to accept a higher short-term interest rate was made after modelling by independent treasury advisors, with the expectation that the

long-term financial benefit from the loan discount would outweigh the short-term increase in interest costs.

Councillor Bearshaw sought further detail in relation to Appendix A, highlighting Community Safety and Nuisance and Marmot initiative. The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained the significant variances in the Marmot Initiative budget line were attributed to differences in profiling and timing of actuals versus forecasts. He agreed to provide a detailed breakdown of the large variance in the Marmot Initiative budget line and send the information post-meeting.

The Vice – Chair, Councillor Blunt, questioned the trend variance going forward on the revenue budget. Discrepancies between summary and detailed revenue budget figures were clarified by the Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer as resulting from differences in financing and borough spend, with the total surplus aligning once these factors were considered.

Councillor Jones questioned the recovery of Housing Benefits Overpayments. The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained the challenges in forecasting housing benefit recovery due to the ongoing transition to Universal Credit, with actual recoveries coming in lower than budgeted and future estimates expected to be adjusted accordingly. The transition to Universal Credit has made it difficult to predict housing benefit overpayment recoveries, as the pace of transition has varied and is now accelerating. Responsibility for collecting overpaid housing benefits is shifting to the Department of Works and Pensions, and the council's role in this area will diminish over time.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the onward recommendations of the Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring report.

Cabinet Recommendation:

1. Note the forecast outturn for Revenue and Capital monitoring position as of 31st December 2025 for 2025/2026.
2. Agree to update the Capital Programme as set out in section 3 of the report.