

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK****CABINET**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Tuesday, 3rd November, 2015 at 5.30 pm in the Committee Suite, King's  
Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Daubney and  
Lord Howard

**CAB70 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 October 2015  
were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB71 URGENT BUSINESS**

None

**CAB72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**CAB73 CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**CAB74 MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

None

**CAB75 CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

**CAB76 FORWARD DECISIONS**

The Forward Decision list was noted. Councillor Long requested that a report be brought to Cabinet on the charging policy for parking and charging of electric cars which he considered cut across a number of portfolios, his own Councillor Pope's and Councillor Daubney's. Councillor Beales undertook to speak to the Leader about including an item.

**CAB77 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES****i) Audit and Risk Committee - 27 October 2015**

The following recommendation was taken into account during consideration of the item on the agenda:

AR61: Mid Year Treasury Report

RESOLVED: The Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

Cabinet is asked to note the report and the treasury activity.

**ii) Resources and Performance Panel – 27 October 2015**

The following recommendation was taken into account during consideration of the item on the agenda:

RP70: Cabinet Report: Customer Services and Channel Shift

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report, together with the following additional recommendation:

Members wished to receive assurance that adequate consultation and communications arrangements would be put in place prior to implementation in April 2016.

**iii) Joint Regeneration & Development and Environment and Community Panels – 28 October 2015**

The following recommendations were taken into account during consideration of the items on the agenda:

RD&EC76: Cabinet Report - Review Of Hackney Carriage And Private Hire Licensing Fees

RESOLVED:

(i) That an update on the ability for private hire operators to sub contract to another local authority operator be provided to the Panel in 12 months time.

(ii) That the Regeneration and Development & Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

1. The Council approves the new fee structure for drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles;

2. The Council approves the new fee structure for private hire operators.
3. The Council approves the new fee structure for vehicles and other sundry matters attached in the fee structure.

RD&EC77: Cabinet Report - Gambling Act Policies

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development & Environment and Community Panel supported the recommendation to Cabinet as set out below:

That the Council be invited to adopt the Statement of Principles in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

RD&EC78: Cabinet Report - Licensing Act Policies

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

That the Council be invited to adopt the revised Statement of Licensing Policy in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003.

**CAB78 CUSTOMER SERVICES AND CHANNEL SHIFT**

The Assistant Director Central & Community Services explained that the Council had embarked on a channel shift programme which aimed to reduce the cost of delivery of council services by shifting the channel used by customers to contact the Council to the most efficient and appropriate method for that service. Significant progress had been made in relation to the council's corporate channel shift project, resulting in:

- The launch of an online housing benefit and council tax support claim form.
- Risk based verification for benefit applications.
- Implementation of an interactive voice response system (IVR).
- 85% of planning applications are now made online.
- Over 99% of council job applications are now made online.
- Online Support Officers helping with assisted self-service.
- 1,000's of online forms submitted.

More digital services would be launched over the next few months. The development and implementation of digital services, together with the need to make budget savings had resulted in a review of the existing model of service delivery with a view to managing demand for services. The CIC offices at Kings Court, Downham Market and Hunstanton operated a walk in enquiry desk facility. 7 members of staff were

needed on the ground floor of Kings Court and one at each area office to respond to customer enquiries. Those staff were required to be trained in every service offered so that they were able to respond to any enquiry which was presented. At busy times customers could have to wait up to 1.5 hours in order to be seen.

With new technology and processes available online, the need for customers to visit the offices in person would reduce. There would not be a need to retain all enquiry counters but equally a face-to-face service was required where this was the best option for that customer. It was therefore proposed to cease the drop in service for enquiries at Kings Court and to offer customers who were unable to resolve their enquiry by telephone or , an appointment with a trained advisor who would be able to assist them with their enquiry at a pre-arranged time.

It was noted that the main reception at King's Court would continue to have two members of staff at all times, together with at least one Online Support Officer. They could resolve straightforward enquiries, signpost customers, help customers with self-service, receive deliveries, greet visitors, make appointments and continue to sell caddy liners as they currently did.

The opening hours for the offices at Hunstanton and Downham Market would reduce to 2 days per week to mirror the opening hours of the DWP office situation in the same buildings.

With regard to the savings to be made with the proposals, it was explained that this linked with previous undertakings relating to channel shift where reductions in staffing levels had been identified. The new arrangements would ensure a much more efficient use of staff time, targeting it to specific appointments instead of waiting on customers coming into the office. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services commented that following earlier changes made it was apparent that customers didn't react badly to change providing it was communicated well and a palatable alternative was given.

Councillor Long asked if it would be possible to look into selling caddy liners via a vending machine in the office in order to save on staff time. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services confirmed it would be something which could be investigated, but reminded Members that there would always be someone on reception at King's Court, and whilst the area offices would be opened less, the liners could be bought from the Oasis and Downham Market Leisure Centre.

Councillor Beales asked if the issue of caddy liners was a channel shift item or environment. Councillor Long reminded Members that the recycling of food was of benefit to the Council with the credits of £50 per tonne being awarded. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services informed Members that she was in the process of looking at a process of making the bags available so they could be accessed whilst ensuring it was cost neutral to the authority.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds asked what the situation would be for the Community Coffee Shop and its volunteers. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services responded that she believed the coffee shop had been brought back in house, still supported by the volunteers so their situation wouldn't be affected.

In response to a question from Councillor Blunt, it was confirmed that Duty staff would continue to be available in Housing to deal with homelessness cases and other emergency situations.

Councillor Beales commented that he felt it was more efficient to offer a specific time slot to customers rather than a walk in service, and asked if it was a core principle that would work for the Council. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services responded that as an advocate for the customer she felt it would be a better service for them, meeting the needs as required.

Councillor Beales asked whether the logistical and financial advantages to the Council would be quantified to which the Assistant Director Central & Community Services explained that a number of other proposals relating to Channel Shift which would introduce saving had yet to be in, but an early review of the impact of the changes would be carried out following 6-9 months of the proposal being implemented.

Councillor Beales drew attention to the point raised by the Resources and Performance Panel which sought confirmation that adequate consultation and communication would take place prior to implementation and asked for confirmation of this which was confirmed.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the following be agreed:

- 1) The withdrawal of a drop in service for enquiries at King's Court and to offer pre-booked appointments to customers who are unable to resolve their enquiry by telephone or online.
- 2) The reduction of the opening days at the Downham Market Office to 2 days per week (Monday and Friday).
- 3) The reduction of the opening days at the Hunstanton Office to 2 days per week (Tuesday and Thursday).
- 4) That adequate consultation and communications arrangements be put in place prior to implementation in April 2016.

## CAB79 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID YEAR REPORT**

The Principal Accountant presented a report which explained that the Council formally adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management in 2011 and remained fully compliant with its requirements.

One of the primary requirements of the Code was:

Receipt by Council of an annual strategy report (including the annual investment strategy report) for the year ahead, a mid year review report and an annual review report of the previous year.

The Mid -Year Review Report had been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice, and covered the following:

- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2015/2016.
- The Council's capital expenditure (prudential indicators).
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2015/2016.
- A review of the Council's borrowing portfolio and debt rescheduling for 2015/2016.
- An economic update for the first six months of 2015/2016.

Councillor Pope asked what the end date for the NWES loan was, to which it was confirmed 30 November 2018 was the ultimate end date for the loan agreement. Councillor Pope also asked what level of interest was paid by NWES for the total amount of the loan considering they were paid in instalments. The Assistant Director – Resources confirmed that the interest was compounded and would be paid in full at the end of the loan, and as it was a back to back agreement, any interest accrued by the Council would be paid by NWES.

Councillor Beales explained that the reason the loan had been set up in the way it had been was because NWES needed certainty over their funding.

Councillor Long asked if the loan to Roydon Parish Council had been repaid, it was confirmed it had been.

Councillor Beales asked if as a benchmark the Council's non traditional investments were doing well. He referred to the fact that the Council had expertise in such things as industrial and commercial properties, and asked if there were areas the Council could go further and take a greater financial risk to develop. The Assistant Director – Resources responded that from a financial perspective if the Treasury Management Policy was amended greater risk could be taken for greater return, as higher rates of return could be achieved by investing in housing, commercial, industrial areas. In response to a further question from Councillor Beales on whether the Council's experience in the non traditional area of investment mitigated some of the risk involved, the Assistant Director confirmed this, subject to appropriate business cases being prepared and agreed, giving the example of the development of industrial units in Downham Market which were let on completion.

It was confirmed that the Audit Committee had considered and noted the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and the treasury activity be noted.

CAB80 **LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY**

Councillor Lawrence invited the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) to present the report which explained that the current 'Statement of Licensing Policy' was approved by Full Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010 with a minor amendment approved on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Regulations required that the policy be reviewed every five years and a replacement for our current policy must be in place by the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The policy had been drawn up in accordance with guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and best practice issued by local government regulation (the new name for lacors).

Consultation had been carried out on the proposed changes to the policy, the amended version of which was now considered.

It was noted that the Joint Panels Meeting had supported the recommendations.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003.

CAB81 **GAMBLING ACT - REVIEW OF POLICIES**

Councillor Lawrence invited the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) to present the report which explained that the Gambling Act 2005 required every local authority to agree a Statement of Principles (previously referred to as 'Statement of Licensing Policy) in accordance with the Statutory Guidance issued under the Act to be in place by January 2016. The policy had been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Gambling Commission and had been subject to consultation.

It was noted that the Joint Panels Meeting had supported the recommendations.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Council be invited to adopt the Statement of Principles in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

CAB82 **REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FEES**

Cabinet considered a report which explained that the Deregulation Act 2015 introduced a few changes to hackney carriage and private hire legislation from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

These changes were:

- The duration of hackney carriage and private hire driver's licenses would be three years;
- The duration of private hire operator's licenses would be five years; and
- Private hire operators would be able to sub-contract bookings to a private hire operator licensed by another authority.

The introduction of the three year driver's and five year operator's licenses required a fee to be set. The last review of the fees was in 2011 so it was considered appropriate to review all hackney carriage and private hire fees at the same time.

The proposed fees looked to recover the actual processing costs and costs to the Council for providing this service. In the past fees had not been calculated in this way and therefore had resulted in the service being subsidised by other service areas, however it was not intended to recover the costs previously incurred and not re-charged.

Councillor Long drew attention to the fact that in the consultation responses some drivers had indicated that they felt the meter charge made by the vehicle should be increased as there had been no increase since 2012. He asked if this should be considered at this stage or if it was a separate matter. The Environmental Health manager (Commercial) responded that it would form part of a separate paper, and had been consulted on directly.

Councillor Pope asked for clarification on how the figures for the costs of the service had been arrived at. It was explained that although a crude figure, it had been calculated on the amount of time spent on the process. She agreed to provide Cabinet Members with the information as to how the figures had been arrived at. Councillor Beales commented on the feedback received and that it would be reassuring if the methodology was available.

Councillor Beales also commented that the licensing of the service and properly charging for those licenses was protecting the drivers to make sure it was properly run and regulated.

Councillor Long complimented the Borough's drivers and trade should be proud of the service they provided, and supported not including the

deficit into the increased fee levels. This was supported by Councillor Beales.

It was noted that the Joint Panels had considered the report and supported it, with an additional resolution that they would review the policy in 12 months time.

**RECOMMENDED:** 1) That the new fee structure for drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles be approved;

2) That the new fee structure for private hire operators be approved.

3) That the new fee structure for vehicles and other sundry matters attached in the fee structure set out in the report be approved.

### CAB83 **RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN SITE LICENSING**

The Housing Services Operations Manager presented a report which explained that there had been legislative changes in the last 2 years in relation to the regulation of residential caravans and park homes. These included the ability of the Council to charge fees for site licensing and taking action in the case of poor standards on sites. Importantly the Council now also had to consider the proposed arrangements for the management and maintenance of sites in respect of new site licence applications, or transfer applications. In relation to park homes, there were also changes in respect of pitch fees, sales and site rules.

A report to Cabinet in June 2014 identified the issues and approved public consultation in relation to the changes and including proposed revised residential caravan site licence conditions.

This report brings forward the results of the consultation, the proposed amended residential caravan site licence conditions and a proposed fees policy.

Councillor Long drew attention to the fact it had been a critical piece of work, particularly bearing in mind the tragic events in Ireland in recent weeks. He stressed that any work done would be for the residents' safety.

Councillor Beales sought confirmation that a key objective of the proposed schedule of charges was to provide income for the Council to monitor conditions on caravans sites with a view to maintaining and improving the quality of life of the residents. The Housing Services Manager – Operations confirmed that this was indeed the case but warned it was not possible to charge for enforcement as part of the

fees and these circumstances would have to be dealt with under separate arrangements.

Councillor Pope asked why the Council was the second highest level of fees, and if the Borough had any 75 berth sites. The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that as the Government Guidance was new, each authority was setting its fee levels. The proposed fees were in keeping with the Government Guidance, and they would be reviewed in the light of actual costs and the fees policy may be reviewed in 12 months. She undertook to provide information to Cabinet Members on the numbers of pitches on different sites. Councillor Blunt also asked if a comparison could be given of the numbers of sites at each charging level.

Councillor Lawrence congratulated officers on providing the policy which would hopefully make residents living conditions better and safer.

It was noted that at their previous meeting the Joint Panels had supported the report.

**RECOMMENDED:** 1) That the report be noted and the approach to dealing with, and enforcement associated with residential caravan sites be endorsed.

2) That the amendments to the standard residential caravan site licence conditions be approved.

3) That the adoption of the proposed Fees Policy to commence on the 1st April 2016 be agreed.

4) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing and Community be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the standard conditions to ensure it complies with legislative requirements, Government Guidance and caselaw.

#### CAB84 **POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

Cabinet considered a report which reminded Members of the Council's duty to undertake a review of the polling districts and polling places in respect of Parliamentary electoral areas that fell within the boundaries of the Borough. This review was last conducted in 2013, but it was the Returning Officer's responsibility to keep polling stations under review. The following recommendations were being made for changes in order to improve accessibility and an improvement to the current polling stations, or where in the case of the Olive Branch Café it was no longer available:

<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Existing Polling Station</b>	<b>Proposed Polling Station</b>
Spellowfields Terrington St Clement	First Terrington Scout and Guide HQ	The Pavilion, Churchgate Way, Terrington St Clement
Spellowfields Tilney All Saints	Eagles Golf Club	Tilney All Saints Village Hall, Church Road, Tilney All Saints
St Margaret's with St Nicholas	The Olive Branch Café	London Road Methodist Church, London Road, King's Lynn

Councillor Long drew attention to the fact that the Pavilion had planning restrictions around the use of the building after 10pm, to which the Democratic Services Manager explained it would not be open to the public after 10pm as that was the close of poll.

Councillor Long also drew attention to the poor condition that he had last seen Tilney All Saints Village Hall in, to which the Democratic Services Manager explained that the building had been refurbished and was now far more accessible than the current polling station.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Beales drew attention to the fact that any ward member comments would be made on at Council

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Polling District and Polling Place Review Schedule attached to the agenda be adopted

**The meeting closed at 6.40 pm**