

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 1st December, 2015 at 5.30 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor N Daubney (Chairman)
Councillors A Lawrence, B Long and Mrs E Nockolds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Beales, R Blunt and Lord Howard

CAB85 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting on 3 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB86 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CAB87 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

CAB88 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

CAB89 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

None.

CAB90 **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None.

CAB91 **FORWARD DECISIONS**

The Forward Decisions List was noted.

CAB92 **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES**

Comments and recommendations were received from the following

Council body which met after the dispatch of this agenda. They were considered with the item on the agenda.

Environment and Community Panel – 25 November 2015

EC9: Cabinet Report – Hackney Carriage And Private Hire Licensing Conditions Review

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

The Council adopt the revised procedures and conditions.

EC10: Cabinet Report – Freebridge Community Housing Representation

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

- (i) To agree the proposed terms of reference to a strategic forum between the Council and Freebridge Community Housing as set out in the report.
- (ii) To agree that the Leader and the Portfolio older with responsibility for Housing, along with the Chief Executive, represent the Council at the proposed forum.

CAB93 HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS

Councillor Lawrence presented a report which explained that the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk had adopted the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 that related to the licensing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, hackney carriage and private hire drivers and private hire operators. The Act permitted Local Authorities to attach conditions to the licenses issued to vehicles, drivers and operators. The purpose of the licensing regime was to ensure the safety of the travelling public, other road users, pedestrians, and the drivers of licensed vehicles. Commercial concerns of the trade could be taken into account but were secondary to the safety aspects of licensing. The last full review of licensing conditions was approved by Full Council on 30th June 2011.

A number of procedures and conditions had also been reviewed with the aim of streamlining procedures and providing more protection for the public, particularly in line with the recent cases of child exploitation across the country.

Councillor Long drew attention to the changes in acceptable mileage levels of vehicles, and commented that the Council had been trying to keep a new fleet of cabs, and up to now had appeared better than neighbouring authorities fleets. He asked what the exceptional circumstances would involve, as generally he would prefer not to

accept cars over 10 years old. The Licensing Manager explained that the criteria was at entry point, if a vehicle was older it would have to be of excellent quality, which was a discretionary judgement taken by officers. This discretion had to be included for appeal purposes. It was noted that the exceptions vehicles were often special event cars.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds asked about the ages of Novelty Vehicles, to which it was explained that this often included vintage vehicles and had in fact included a fire engine in the past.

The Chairman drew attention to the fact that often legislative changes came into force which the Council had no choice but to implement and change policies and procedures accordingly. He proposed that a further recommendation be included that when legislative changes were made, policies and procedures be updated accordingly in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member. This was supported.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That revised procedures and conditions be adopted.

2) That delegated authority be given to the appropriate officer in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to amend policies and procedures in order to incorporate any future legislative or regulatory changes.

CAB94 **STRATEGIC FORUM: FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING & BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

Councillor Lawrence presented a report which proposed the establishment of a structured forum involving Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) and the Council.

The report explained that whilst an effective relationship had been maintained since stock transfer in 2006, there was currently no existing forum for the two organisations to engage in discussion on strategic matters at a Senior Member/Director level.

In recent years FCH had developed into an increasingly important partner to the Borough Council not only in terms of the provision of social and affordable housing but also on wider community issues. Close working with FCH was vital in relation to speedily addressing the need of homeless people and families to whom the Council owed a statutory duty, as well as in terms of providing homes for people on the housing register. FCH were a key partner within the West Norfolk partnership and had played a significant part in a range of community initiatives, an example being their acquisition of the Providence Street community facilities in King's Lynn which had been enhanced and

improved both operationally and physically since FCH acquired the building from Norfolk County Council.

A strategic forum had been proposed (to include two meetings per year) that would provide an opportunity to ensure that respective priorities were understood; that new opportunities were explored; and that challenges and risks were identified. The proposal to establish formal arrangements for engagement came at a time of significant change in the operating environment of registered housing providers.

The Chief Executive drew attention to the fact that the proposed arrangements were similar to those operated with the College of West Anglia (COWA) and formalised discussions in a more transparent manner. FCH Board had agreed to the proposal.

Councillor Daubney drew attention to the fact that the proposal would ensure people were better informed of works with FCH in the same way as with the COWA and Alive.

Councillor Pope asked what would happen with the Golden Share if FCH should merge with any other Housing Provider. Councillor Lawrence commented that it might end up necessary to exercise the golden share if the Council wasn't in agreement with any proposal, it could potentially come to Cabinet for discussion about the best way forward. The Chief Executive explained that when the Council required the Golden Share in the transfer it was to make sure things couldn't happen without the Council taking a view on it taking into account the interests of the people of the Borough. If members felt any arrangements weren't acceptable Cabinet could instruct the Cabinet member to exercise the Golden Share. It was a negotiating tool for the Council to ensure the people in the Borough were protected.

Councillor Long welcomed the proposal and stated he had abstained at the Board Meeting so he could agree it at this meeting. He felt it made for a more transparent outward facing and formal footing, and felt that there would be less need to use the Golden Share when in discussion with FCH.

RESOLVED: 1) That the proposed terms of reference to form a strategic forum between the Council and FCH as set out in the report be approved.

2) That the Leader and the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing, along with the Chief Executive, represent the Council at the proposed Forum.

The meeting closed at 5.51 pm