

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

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 1st August, 2017  
at 5.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place,  
King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Long (Chairman)  
Councillors R Blunt, I Devereux, P Hodson, Mrs K Mellish and Mrs E Nockolds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Beales and A Lawrence

CAB28 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB29 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None

CAB30 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

CAB31 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman had received correspondence related to the Riverfront Regeneration from amongst others the Hardings Pits Association, St Margaret's and St Nicholas Ward Forum and individuals. He commented that he felt the objections were premature as the details considerations would come later.

CAB32 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Under Standing Order 34, Councillors Crofts, Joyce and Pope attended.

CAB33 **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

CAB34 **FORWARD DECISIONS**

The Forward Decision List was noted.

CAB35 **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES**

It was noted that the Regeneration and Development Panel had considered the Riverfront item and points were incorporated into the report.

The Corporate Performance Panel had considered the Area Offices report and had asked for the report to come back to the Panel but had declined to state what additional information was required. Additional information had been provided in the report for this meeting.

CAB36 **PLANNING CODE OF CONDUCT**

Councillor Blunt presented the report which recommended further amendments to the Members Code of Good Practice for Planning to reflect current and best practice. It was pointed out that the Code was there to protect Members of the Planning Committee if they adhered to it.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope expressed the view that the element of not engaging in social media during the Planning Meeting should be extended to all Council meetings.

It was noted that the Council did need to move with the modern world, and some did consider tweeting from a meeting as unprofessional and off putting for other members. It was considered that to ensure Members could pay attention to the meeting the time to tweet would be after a meeting not during it.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the revised Code of Practice be adopted.

**Reason for Decision**

To ensure the best practice in the planning process.

CAB37 **WALPOLE CROSS KEYS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND NORTH RUNCTON AND WEST WINCH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor Blunt presented the report which explained that the Borough Council must consider the independent Examiner's recommendations, and decide for itself whether the proposed neighbourhood plans as amended by the Examiner for Walpole Cross Keys and North Runcton & West Winch (Joint) met the statutory tests, and hence whether they should proceed to a local referendum. The referendum result would dictate if the neighbourhood plans would be brought into force (adopted) and become part of the Development Plan.

The report also explained that recent changes to Neighbourhood Planning regulations had introduced timescales for which decisions must be made by Local Planning Authorities. The meant that

'delegated authority for decisions on neighbourhood planning' would need to be agreed accordingly.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That the submitted Walpole Cross Keys Neighbourhood Plan:

- a. be amended in accordance with the recommendations of the independent Examiner; and
- b. so modified, should proceed to a local referendum covering the area of Walpole Cross Keys Parish.

2) That the submitted North Runcton & West Winch (Joint) Neighbourhood Plan:

- a. be amended in accordance with the recommendations of the independent Examiner; and
- b. so modified, should proceed to a local referendum covering the area of North Runcton and West Winch Parishes.

3) That delegated authority be given be given to the Executive Director for Environment and Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Development, to make decisions on:

- a. As to whether a neighbourhood plan should proceed to a referendum, and if so whether the plan must first be amended to meet the relevant statutory requirements/

### **Reason for Decision**

In line with the Borough Council's obligations under the Localism Act, and in particular to achieve compliance of these neighbourhood plans with the 'Basic Conditions'. To comply with recent changes to the neighbourhood planning regulations.

### **CAB38 BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK AREA OFFICES**

Councillor Mrs Mellish presented a report which reminded Members that the Borough Council currently had services delivered directly to the customer which were provided from the main council office in King's Court, King's Lynn and from the satellite offices in Downham Market and Hunstanton on a part time basis. The report proposed the closure of the area offices in order to bring the staff based there back to King's Court in order to assist with the high level of enquiries which was better use of their time.

The cash offices in all the offices were closed in 2011 but the Downham and Hunstanton offices remained open until the introduction of digital services, when the numbers of customers visiting the area

offices reduced over time resulting in April 2016, the number of days the offices opened to 2 per week (Downham Market on Monday's and Fridays and Hunstanton on Tuesdays and Thursdays). Customers were using the digital channels to make enquiries and requests for services including housing and benefit enquiries both of which were now fully digitalised negating the need to visit the offices in person.

The area offices also used to include Freebridge Community Housing and Job Centre Plus (JCP) who leased office space in the buildings and provided a face-to-face service to customers. Freebridge ceased their presence several years ago and JCP have advised they will be withdrawing their staff at both offices in September 2017.

Councillor Mrs Mellish drew attention to the fact that the Corporate Performance Panel had requested the report come back to the Panel, but had not requested any specific information. Therefore over the course of a week customers at the area offices had been asked for details of the reasons for their visits, which had shown that the vast majority of visits had been to purchase caddy liners, which was ceasing shortly.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope disagreed that the offices should be closed as he felt that it was a decline in the services for the rural areas.

It was noted that no complaints had been received when the hours were originally reduced, the numbers of customers continued to fall and attention was also drawn to the fact that for certain services if a vulnerable customer was unable to visit, telephone or digitally access services, a visiting officer could come to assist them. Attention was also drawn to the fact that some rural areas were as far from the area office as the main office.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council close the area offices from a date to be agreed with the Job Centre Plus to co-ordinate the communications to our customers.

### **Reason for Decision**

Closing the area offices would free up four days of staff resource to ease the pressure on the telephone contact centre. Most services are available online and customers can telephone for a service request if they are unable to access online services. The council still offers a Visiting Officer service to visit elderly or vulnerable customers, if they require a personalised service.

Following a recommendation from the Corporate Performance Panel, consultation was undertaken with customers using both offices to determine the potential impact on the local community and service users of closing the offices. The majority of customers were in attendance to purchase caddy liners or because they were in town.

**CAB39 REFUSE AND RECYCLING CONTRACT PROCUREMENT**

Councillor Devereux presented a report which explained that discussions had been held with neighbouring councils in Norfolk to consider the most cost effective and economically advantageous approach to the procurement of the waste and recycling function. The review had identified that the most cost effective service would best be achieved through a joint procurement of the service.

It was noted that a similar approach was taken in 2009 which successfully established the framework for the existing contract which was effective in attracting a range of bidders but provided for local decisions on the detail of service delivered.

The report explained that the best available opportunity for progress was through joining North Norfolk District Council, along with Broadland and potentially one other. North Norfolk were about to commence a procurement exercise for their next collection contract. The inclusion of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and others in the official notices would lead to the potential for improved savings to all participating councils.

**RESOLVED:** That the Executive Director for Commercial Services be authorised to commence a joint procurement for the Borough council's refuse and recycling contract undertaken with North Norfolk District Council and other potential partners

**Reason for Decision**

The potential for savings in the procurement of a collection contract for waste and recycling are more likely to be achieved by joint procurement and savings will also be made through the sharing of the costs of procurement. The decision is urgent as official procurement notices are due to be published as part of North Norfolk District Council's existing process

**CAB40 AUDIT COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS 2016-17**

The Audit Manager presented the report which provided Cabinet with the results of the 'Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee' for 2016-17 and confirmed that the Committee was fulfilling its stated purpose which was 'to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affected the Council's exposure to risk and weakened the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process'.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope, as Chairman of the Audit Committee, confirmed that he felt the Audit Committee was working effectively, and the knowledge of Members of the Committee had grown over a period of time and he felt they were doing a good job. He

reminded Members that the Council had received an unqualified opinion on the accounts from the Auditors for those completed by 31 July for the first time using the new timetable in force from 2018.

All members of the Audit Committee were thanked for their work, and the additional training encouraged by the Chairman was congratulated, and considered worthy of attendance by any and all members of the Council to improve the knowledge in those areas.

**RESOLVED:** That the evidence presented in the report as confirming that the Audit Committee operated effectively during 2016-17 be accepted.

**Reason for Decision**

To ensure the Council continues to meet its obligations under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**CAB41 NON DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEFS**

Councillor Long presented the report which explained that at the Budget on 8 March 2017 the Chancellor announced the Government would make available a discretionary fund of £300m over four years from 2017/2018 to support those businesses facing the steepest increases in their business rates bills as a result of the 2017 Revaluation.

Every Billing Authority had been awarded a share of the £300m based on the increases in their rates bills, and Billing Authorities were free to decide on a scheme to allocate this to their ratepayers. The Scheme was not applicable to large national chains due to the state aid rules.

The report presented detailed the recommended Discretionary Relief scheme to allocate this funding to local ratepayers. It was proposed that the recommendations be submitted to the Special Council on 31 August in order to get the scheme under way as soon as possible.

**RECOMMENDED:** That Council at its Special Meeting on 31 August consider:

1. That the new Discretionary Revaluation Relief scheme for Year 1 (2017/2018) is a banded scheme where a fixed amount of relief is awarded for occupied properties based on the amount the ratepayer's bill has increased as at 1 April 2017,
2. That the principle of a banded scheme is retained in Years 2, 3 and 4 with delegated authority given to the s151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to review and decide the bandwidths and the value of the relief given to each band,
3. That delegated authority be given to the Leader to consider individual applications for the new Discretionary Revaluation Relief scheme that do not meet these criteria, and

4. Delegated authority is given to the Council's s151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree any Non Domestic Rate Relief schemes where the eligibility criteria are specified by Central Government and the cost is met in full by Central Government through a Grant.

### **Reasons for Decisions**

To ensure a Discretionary Relief scheme for Ratepayers facing the steepest increases in their bills is recommended to Council.

To ensure future Relief initiatives, where the eligibility criteria are specified by Central Government and the cost in met in full, can be implemented in a timely manner.

## **CAB42 RIVERFRONT REGENERATION**

The Regeneration, Heritage and Economic Development Manager presented a report proposing the endorsement of the Riverfront Delivery Plan which had been prepared following extensive site analysis and public consultation, for the historic King's Lynn riverfront area. The masterplan set out the vision and design principles for the development of this strategic regeneration area. The Delivery Plan was accompanied by an exempt detailed financial viability and delivery options report (exempt – appendix 3) which suggested there was sufficient evidence of viability at this stage to pursue the project. The report recommended an allocation of up to £350,000 (of which £100,000 was externally funded from the Heritage Action Zone for a feasibility study and potentially £125,000 from the Norfolk Business Rates Pool) to progress the next stage of work in order to develop and test the scheme further.

Cabinet acknowledged that the long term ambition was to improve the Riverfront as the Tuesday and Saturday Market Places had already been and to encourage people to come to the town taking in the Riverfront and the Nar Loop area. The proposals would also improve the air pollution situation for the whole of the town when there were few opportunities to alleviate some of the areas with Air Quality problems. It was also acknowledged that as a major scheme, a number of issues would have to be looked at in detail before final decisions were taken.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor C Crofts commented on his vision for the encouragement of coach excursions to the town to encourage tourists to visit by providing user friendly drop off sites for coaches with some facilities. He had carried out research and very few coach companies came to the town for the day, when they did do to other towns with far less to offer. He therefore felt that this should be incorporated into the plan.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor C Joyce commented that he could not see anything on the impact the development of the Riverfront would

have on the rest of the town, or that concerns of local groups were being taken into account. He referred to an earlier planning permission on NORA and a traffic cap on the area. He also had concern about the number of properties being built in King's Lynn, and considered that if the Riverfront was being developed for housing the residents would need a doctors surgery which he thought could sit in Boal Quay.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that the traffic cap referred to was lifted in 2012 following highway works to the area. A transport assessment would be carried out as part of the work which would feed into any planning application.

It was also confirmed that the demand and location of the proposed doctors surgery was at the request of the NHS, not the Borough Council.

**RECOMMENDED:** 1) That the final King's Lynn Riverfront Delivery Plan be endorsed.

2) That the next steps be approved to progress and test the scheme further as set out in section 4 of the report

3) Approve allocation of up to £250,000 to the 2017/18 capital programme to support next phase of work to develop and test the scheme further as detailed in section 4 of the report.

4) That the potential delivery options outlined in section 8 of the report be noted and officers endorsed to progress investigation and testing of these options in order to ascertain developer interest in the scheme.

5) That officers be authorised to progress discussions and applications to external partners and funding agencies to enable delivery of the scheme.

### **Reason for Decision**

To enable a transformational riverfront scheme for King's Lynn to be developed and tested further in line with the vision and principles set out in the masterplan in line with the corporate priority to drive local economic and housing growth.

### **CAB43 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 they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**CAB44 EXEMPT - RIVERFRONT REPORT**

Cabinet considered the exempt elements of the Riverfront report which included the financial implications and risk.

Discussion was held on what work would need to be carried out regardless of the proposals, and what funding was likely to be received.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor Pope commented on those works which needed to be carried out, asked about the land holdings and values and stated that before making a final decision on the 10 year project careful consideration should be given. The Property Services Manager updated Members on the land position and it was confirmed that the overall development would be carried out in stages.

**CAB45 KING'S COURT - CONTRACT AUTHORITY**

Councillor Mellish presented a report which provided an update in respect of the proposals set out in the previous Cabinet Report (October 2016) for the proposed commercial leasing arrangements for office accommodation at the Borough Council's main administrative office building : King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The report also sought authority to enter into contracts for the necessary adaptation of King's Court, the financial arrangements for recouping these capital sums, and any necessary contracting arrangements for the provision of services relating to the leasing arrangements outlined within this report.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That the content of the report satisfies the required Portfolio Holder consultations as outlined within the previous (October 2016) Cabinet Report.

2) That delegated authority be given to the Property Services Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Facilities and ICT, the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Director for Commercial Services to amend the Capital Programme as necessary for the delivery of this project and to enter into the contract(s) for the physical adaptations and any associated contracts relating to the provision of services as part of the leasing arrangement(s).

3) That the Legal Services Manager be given delegated authority to draft and finalise all necessary documentation, contractual or otherwise, associated with the proposed leasing arrangements, associated services, and adaptation contracts for King's Court.

**Reason for Decision**

The proposals set out within this report will facilitate closer working between public sector bodies whilst generating revenue income and sharing the operating costs of King's Court thereby contributing towards the Council's Cost Reduction Programme. The report will also satisfy the requirements of the rules set out within the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

CAB46 **NORA SALE OF LAND**

The Property Services Manager presented a report which explained that the Borough Council was the freehold owner of a parcel of land at the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area (NORA), King's Lynn. The overall NORA site had been assembled and works had been undertaken to remediate and provide infrastructure in order to provide a supply of commercial, employment, retail, and residential development land.

The report set out the provisionally agreed terms for the proposed disposal of a parcel of land at NORA, and authority was sought from Cabinet to progress this disposal through to completion.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor C Joyce addressed the Cabinet seeking detail on the land and associated terms of the sale. The Property Services Manager explained the detail.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor Pope asked for clarification on the sale figure. It was confirmed that the figure in 5.1 of the report was the negotiated sale figure.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That the disposal of this land asset be progressed along the lines set out within the report.

2) That delegated authority be given to the Property Services Manager to finalize the terms of the proposed disposal set out within this report.

**3) That Authority be granted to the Legal Services Manager to progress the necessary transfer, or any other associated, documentation through to completion.**

**Reason for Decision**

The proposal set out within this report fits well with the vision for NORA and will provide the Borough Council with a sizeable capital receipt.

**The meeting closed at 7.00 pm**