

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes from the Meeting of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee held on Monday, 13th July, 2015 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor A Tyler (Chairman)
Councillors L Bambridge, Mrs S Buck, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, I Gourlay, C Joyce, C Kittow, P Rochford, T Smith, Mrs M Wilkinson and T Wing-Pentelow

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G McGuinness and G Middleton

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor A Tyler be appointed as Chairman for the Municipal Year 2015/2016.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs S Collop be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2015/2016.

3 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

6 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

7 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

The Chairman referred to an email which had been sent by the Democratic Services Officer on 2 July 2015 from the Clerk to West

Winch Parish Council regarding a Neighbourhood Plan. The email stated that if anyone had any comments to make then these should be raised under Chairman's Correspondence.

The Committee had no comments to make on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Gourlay raised the issue of Traffic Management in King's Lynn and asked whether this could be added to the work programme. It was advised that the Regeneration and Development and Environment and Community Panel would be considering the issue at a future meeting. However Members considered that this was an important issue and should be a future agenda item.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson also raised the issue that more care should be taken with planning applications particularly developers leaving estates not completed.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that issues such as air quality and traffic management were considered at Panel Meetings.

Councillor Gourlay proposed that the issue of traffic management in King's Lynn should be dealt with by way of a Councillor Call for Action. The Democratic Services Officer advised that there was a process to go through and she would send Councillor Gourlay the details.

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KING'S LYNN TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

The Economic Development Officer explained that the King's Lynn Town Centre Action Plan was currently being updated. A copy of the previous Action Plan had been circulated as part of the agenda, so that the Committee could see what the previous Action Plan contained. He explained that the Action Plan had been produced to provide a response to the challenges that King's Lynn Town Centre faced.

The Town Centre Plan drew together the priorities and plans set out in many other policy documents, the Council's capital programme and activity of other partner organisations into one place so as to create a holistic approach to attracting more people to the town centre by facilitating amenity improvement, attracting investment in a wider range of retail, culture and leisure based economic activity, encouraging housing development and creating quality public spaces.

The Town Centre Plan also provided evidence for investment and funding opportunities.

Consultation had taken with other stakeholders for example Norfolk County Council Highways, Bus Operators, King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership.

The Economic Development Officer explained that the document was an action plan and not a strategy.

The Economic Development Officer also explained that the Town Centre Action Plan had been summarised into 6 themes contained in the Urban Development Strategy as follows:

1. *High Quality Public Realm & Spaces:* Creating variety and enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of public realm to improve the perception of the town.
2. *Maximise Historic assets:* Utilising the town's historic assets to improve the town's regional position in the tourism market.
3. *Diversify the town centre offer:* Increasing activity in areas other than the retail area, particularly along the waterfront and varying town centre provision.
4. *A town centre that is easily accessible:* Creating a pedestrian and cycle friendly town centre environment and enhancing public transport and vehicular access and facilities.
5. *A place for people to live, work and socialise:* Focussing residential development appropriate to the intimate nature of King's Lynn and in historic core and creating a lively and vibrant environment which meets the needs and aspirations of people of all ages.
6. *Events & promotion:* Marketing the town locally and regionally through a variety of small and large activities, events and promotional materials.

The Economic Development Officer explained that the 2015 Plan was being finalised and would be taken to Cabinet and the Town Centre Partnership.

Councillor Joyce stated that he could not see anything in the Action Plan which tackled the night-time economy which was putting pressure on Council's resources. In addition, the lighting within the town centre did not meet British Standards and restricted footfall.

Councillor Joyce also referred to the fact the previous Local Government stated that Councils should not be making any profit from car parking charges.

The Economic Development Officer explained that the purpose of the Action Plan was to record activities. He considered that policing of the night time economy was part of the Police routine operation activities and was therefore not recorded. He added that activities were being

undertaken by other parts of the Council. In relation to street lighting, he explained that there was a programme to upgrade street lighting within the town centre but this had not been progressed due to Norfolk County Council funding cuts.

In response to a query from Councillor Gourlay who referred to the £100,000 set aside for town centre promotions, the Town Centre Manager explained that he had a separate budget for Christmas lights, also the events programme had a separate budget line, however, he did not have the exact figures of that budget.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager pointed out that the events programme was due to be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.

Councillor Collop referred to the theme 'a town centre that is easily accessible' and expressed concern in relation to the amount of A Boards and the problems being encountered with them; together with the lack of control over them.

The Economic Development Officer explained that one action in the Plan was to reduce the amount of clutter within the town centre, which could include A Boards. He further explained that if the A Boards were sited on a highway then it was the responsibility of the County Highways. In addition, the King's Lynn Town Centre Partnership did raise the issue of A Boards on a regular basis and a representative from County Highways was normally in attendance. It was reported that County Highways had, in the past, undertaken a 'sweep' of the town centre and removed illegal A Boards.

Councillor Miss Bambridge reiterated that A Board were a problem but County Highways had always been good to respond to issues. She suggested that if any Member had any concerns then they should report them to Sally Bettinson at County Highways.

Councillor Gourlay stated that Council had agreed a licensing scheme for A Boards and asked why this had not been progressed.

The Town Centres Manager explained that the proposed scheme was currently under review in relation to how consent and enforcement could be handled by the Borough.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson expressed concern that this issue was still ongoing having raised it several years ago and appeared to be no further forward.

The Chairman asked whether the traders were clear on the rules and regulations relating to A Boards.

The Economic Development Officer agreed to email County Highways to inform them of the Committee's concerns in relation to A Boards.

The Vice-Chairman asked whether the same rules applied for table and chairs.

The Town Centres Manager explained that some tables and chairs had obtained planning consent and paid the appropriate fee. Planning Enforcement could get involved with those who were operating without consent. If any Councillors were aware of any tables and chairs without consent then please contact officers.

The Economic Development Officer stated that checks could be made with the Enforcement Team to see if there was a list of those establishments which had permission for their tables and chairs.

The Town Centres Manager advised that all tables and chairs on the Tuesday Market Place and Saturday Market Place had got consent.

Councillors Bambridge and Wing-Pentelow left the meeting at 6.50 pm

Councillor Collop referred to people who just turned up for one day's trading and asked how these could be controlled. In response, the Town Centres Manager explained the difference between Hawker, Direct Debit Sales and General Trading with Consent.

Councillor Gourlay stated that he considered that the white pods within the town centre should have planning permission. He explained that it was envisaged that the Vancouver Quarter would be submitting a planning application for the remaining stalls.

The Chairman thanked the Economic Development Officer for attending the meeting.

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MARKETS

The Town Centres Manager gave a presentation to the Committee on King's Lynn markets.

He explained that in 2013 traders were relocated to the town centre pitches ahead of the Tuesday Market Place revamp. Some traders needed to shrink in size in order for them to be accommodated. A few decided to relinquish as they would not be able to trade unless their van was with their pitch. Footfall increased on Baxter's Plain and New Conduit Street as a result/.

An Informal Working Group was set up in January 2014 where a number of stakeholders were interviewed. The results were reported to the REC Panel in March 2014.

The main points from the report included:

- Removing the restrictive policy on the number of stalls selling the same or similar products to allow new traders if they committed to a long-term booking.
- Setting a standard for stalls in terms of visual presentation and assist in upgrading the existing stalls. It was proposed that the Blue and Gold be adopted as the King's Lynn colour theme.
- The Tuesday Market in King's Lynn should operate on both the Tuesday Market Place (new granite area) and in the town centre.
 - Granite area allowing some space allocated for stall holders' vehicles if these need to be adjacent to or part of the market stall.
 - To limit the impact on parking, at least half of the 20 minute parking bays to be retained as available.
 - Increase charges for market stalls in the town centre locations only on Tuesdays by 50% which is to be implemented this financial year.

A meeting was held with Market Traders earlier this month.

- Discussion regarding the reintroduction of stalls on the Tuesday Market Granite Area.
- Those currently trading in the town centre were being given first refusal to return, or they can remain where they are.
- No complaints were received regarding:
 - 50% rent increase being implemented this financial year for those that remain in the town centre
 - Or stalls selling the same or similar products.
- Looking to implement the Tuesday Market Place granite area once all responses from current traders had been received.

Councillor Smith asked what would happen if the granite area on the Tuesday Market Place was full. In response, the Town Centres Manager explained that an extra area could be provided on the non-car park area and if necessary some car parking spaces could be taken back for the market.

Councillor Gourlay asked whether planning permission was required for the markets within the town centre and who would need to apply. The Town Centres Manager outlined the process that would be required. He also outlined the fee structure which had been agreed with the Vancouver Quarter.

Councillor Kittow expressed concern that the market on the Saturday Market Place appeared to be dying off and there was currently only a fish van trading on a Saturday. The Town Centre Manager explained that different initiatives had taken place such as giving traders 4 weeks free use of the Saturday Market with a view to charging on the 5th week however the traders did not come back after the 4th week.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that later in the meeting the Committee would be receiving a presentation from the THI Project Officer on the THI scheme, the main aim of which was to regenerate those areas. He explained that a small market had been piloted with Market Bistro, which proved to be a successful day, but when finances were required the interest disappeared. He acknowledged that this was a difficult location as traders wanted to be where the footfall was. This was a key area and with the THI works being carried out then hopefully people would be encouraged to visit that part of town.

The THI Project Officer explained that on 12 and 13 September to tie in with the Heritage Open Day, there would be a Butchers, Barbers and Beer event taking place on the Saturday Market Place.

Councillor Smith asked whether stalls could be given to traders for free on the Saturday Market Place for those traders wishing to start up. The Town Centres Manager explained that this had happened in the past and had been used for a couple of weeks but then the traders did not come back. He explained that he would prefer some kind of system where traders paid a fee in advance and were refunded if they traded, otherwise stalls could be set up with no-one showing up to trade.

In response to comment from Councillor Gourlay, the Town Centres Manager explained that there was still a charity stall available every Tuesday along Tower Street.

The Chairman thanked the Town Centres Manager for an interesting presentation.

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ST MARGARET'S TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE

Steven King, the THI Officer gave a presentation to the Committee, and outlined the critical projects; the progress made to date and the next steps for the scheme. He explained that:

- The Borough Council have been successful with the Stage 2 application for funding.
- Funding: £1m BCKLWN, £1m HLF, £800,000 (private investment)
- 3 critical, 20 priority and a further 68 reserve properties
- Saturday Market Place - £140,000 contribution

- Over 2,200 sqm to be brought back into use
- 285 new jobs created (125 direct and 160 in the local economy) and 250 jobs safeguarded

The next steps for the scheme were:

- THI Project Officer in post for 7 months now
- Saturday Market Place works now completed
- Meetings have taken place with all owners of critical projects. Grant application expected for Greyfriars Chambers, St James Street, imminently.
- Contact made with all owners of Priority Projects.
- Focus on Saturday Market Place, with applications expected for at least two properties.
- Clusters of properties interested in applying for THI grant in both St James St and Tower St.
- Contact made with two absentee landlords.
- Partnership Board has met and is due to meet soon
- Project Monitor has visited all Critical Projects and is supportive of aims.
- Training and education programme in conjunction with CWA, culminating with our April exhibition.
- Partnership working with Stories of Lynn HLF project.
- Work with Discovery centre over training for NEETS.
- Community event "Beer, Barbers and Butchers" to take place on 12 and 13 September.
- Autumn programme of talks

The next steps for the scheme were:

- Continue to work with owner of 9 – 11 St James Street in preparing grant application.
- Encourage owner of Wenn's Hotel to apply for grant funding. Liaise with other interested council departments.
- Keep on pushing forward for priority projects uptake.
- Partnership working, i.e. Freebridge
- Continue to promote THI to dwindling number of landowners who to date have not shown interest.
- Work with enforcement colleagues to develop carrot and stick approach. Liaise with DLB

The Chairman made reference to 9-11 Tower Street. The THI Project Officer stated that it was owned privately and he was in regular contact with the owner. There was a planning consent in place for residential accommodation.

Councillor Kittow stated that the corners were of particular interest and explained that the newsagent on the corner opposite the Wenns was looking to move, therefore there may be an empty unit.

The Chairman thanked the THI Project Officer for the update.

11 **APPOINTMENTS TO PLANNING SUB-GROUP**

The Chairman explained that the Committee was looking for Members to join the Committee's Planning Sub-Group.

AGREED: (1) That Councillors Mrs S Collop and C Kittow be appointed to the Committee's Planning Sub-Group.

(2) That the Democratic Services Officer arranges induction training for Councillor Mrs S Collop and C Kittow.

(3) That the Democratic Services Officer emails the rest of the Committee to see if any other member would like to be appointed to the Committee's Planning Sub-Group.

The Chairman left the meeting at 7.45 pm. The Vice-Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

12 **COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Work Programme. In addition to those items already programmed in, the following items were raised for inclusion:

- Open Space byelaws
- King's Lynn Traffic Plan
- Visit to Old Pilot Cinema Site.

The Committee also considered that it would be useful to have a regular update from the Town Centres Manager.

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on **Monday, 28 September 2015** at **6.00pm** in the **Committee Suite, King's Court.**

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm