

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 3rd December, 2020 at 4.30 pm in a Remote Meeting on Zoom and available for the public to view on WestNorfolkBC on You Tube - Zoom and You Tube

PRESENT: Councillor G Hipperson (Chair)
 Councillors B Ayres, Miss L Bambridge, P Beal, J Bhondi, R Blunt, F Bone, C Bower, A Bubb, A Bullen, Mrs J Collingham, J Collop, S Collop, C J Crofts, S Dark, M de Whalley, I Devereux, A Dickinson, P Gidney, A Holmes, Lord Howard, M Howland, G Howman, C Hudson, H Humphrey, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Lawton, B Long, J Lowe, C Manning, G Middleton, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Nash, E Nockolds, T Parish, S Patel, J Ratcliffe, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, C Sampson, S Sandell, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey, A Tyler, D Tyler and D Whitby

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Wilkinson

C:123 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That Councillor B Ayres be appointed Vice-Chair for the meeting.

C:124 PRAYERS

Prayers were led by Rev Canon Ling.

C:125 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

C:126 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

C:127 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chris Bamfield

The Mayor made the following statement:

“On behalf of myself and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Wilkinson, who are both previous environmental portfolio holders and knew Chris Bamfield well, I would like to say that our thoughts are with Chris’ wife Vanessa and his children Ashton and Jamie after the recent tragic event in the sea off Hunstanton. The appeal for the Royal National

Lifeboat Institution following this disaster has now reached almost £12,000.”

C:128 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None

C:129 **DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS RELATING TO SECOND HOMES AND EMPTY DWELLINGS FOR 2021/2022**

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RESOLVED: Under Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as enacted by Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2003, Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as enacted by Section 11 and Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and in accordance with the provisions of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 the Council determines:

1. That the council tax discount for Second Homes defined as being within Class A of the Regulations is set at 0% for 2021/2022;
2. That the council tax discount for Second Homes as defined by Class B of the Regulations is set at 0% for 2021/2022;
3. That the council tax discount for Empty / Unfurnished dwellings defined as being within Class C of the Regulations is set at 0% for 2021/2022;
4. That the council tax discount for Uninhabitable dwellings defined as being within Class D of the Regulations is set at the following for 2021/2022:
 - a. 25% for 12 months starting on the day the dwelling becomes uninhabitable; then
 - b. 0% once the 12 month period has expired;
5. That the Levy rate for Long Term Empty Dwellings as defined in the Regulations is set as follows for 2021/2022:
 - a. 100% for properties empty between two and five years,
 - b. 200% for properties empty longer than five years, and
 - c. 300% for properties empty longer than ten years;

6. That any period of occupation of fewer than six weeks shall be disregarded when calculating the maximum period of a reduction or the start date of the Levy;
7. That delegated authority be given for individual applications under s13a Local Government Finance Act 1992 be determined by the Revenues and Benefits Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance and the relevant Ward Member/s.
8. In accordance with Section 11A(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as enacted by Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012, these determinations shall be published in at least one newspaper circulating in West Norfolk before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the determinations.

C:130 **MATTERS CARRIED OVER FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

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Cabinet recommendations from 22 September 2020 not dealt with at council on 15 October 2020

Councillor Long proposed the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Nockolds.

CAB168 Revised Revenue Budget 2020-21
Council debated the item and with no dissenters the recommendations were agreed.

CAB170 Scrutiny and Executive Protocol

Councillor Joyce proposed the following amendments to the protocol, these were seconded by Councillor Parish:

Page 123 of the Cabinet report,

Scrutiny of decisions made, other than with regards to a call in

1. change the word "should" to "must" so that it reads. "The appropriate Portfolio Holder must be invited by the Chair to attend the meeting."
- 2 Page 124 "The Panel Chair will invite the Portfolio Holder to set out the rationale and policy objectives which resulted in the report/proposal being brought forward."

The amendments were debated, and Councillor Joyce summed up. On being put to the vote the amendments were lost.

Following the debate on the substantive, as there were no dissenters the recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 22 September 2020 be agreed.

C:131 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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Under standing order 9 the Mayor invited the following to pose their questions:

1 Question from Ms Trudy Clark

With reference to the Town Deal; may I ask what decisions the Town Deal Board have reached concerning the fund and how soon can any decisions be implemented?

Cllr Middleton responded:

The Town Deal Board have agreed the Town Investment Plan covering investment priorities (which includes the asks to government circa £25m) and this has been submitted to government. The Cabinet endorsed the TIP at its special meeting 26 October. Feedback is expected from government in early January, and it is expected 'heads of terms' (a broad agreement of those initiatives to be funded, the terms and conditions, and indicative values) will be agreed within a couple of months. This will be a three way agreement between government, the Town Deal Board and the Borough Council. Further detailed business case work will then start. There will be up to a 12 months for this to be completed and finalised with central government.

In relation to the Town Deal Accelerated funding that was announced in July, the Town Deal Board endorsed the proposal to support the School of Nursing and Public realm projects for the submission to government in August 2020. This was approved by Cabinet as the lead authority and accountable body for the funds at the meeting on 10th August 2020. The funding was approved by government in September and delivery of the schemes are now underway.

By way of supplementary Ms Clark asked if any of the money would be spent on the proposed Parkway development. Councillor Middleton responded that there were a variety of items which had been put forward but as some were commercial it was not possible at this stage to divulge the detail as the Government had not yet confirmed the success or otherwise of the bids.

2 **Public Question from Mr Alistair Kent**

Peat.

There are well documented and serious adverse consequences arising from peat extraction for horticultural and agricultural use, including loss of habitat and biodiversity, run off and waterway pollution and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Given the existence of viable and cost effective alternative products such as bark, coir and wood fibre, and in the light of the recently adopted policy on climate change, has the council committed or will the council commit to stop the purchase of peat for use in parks and gardens and for amenity planting in all situations, and for all planting associated with the Anglia in Bloom Award, and/or to set a date by when this will be implemented?

Councillor Mrs Nockolds responded: At the moment the Compost we are using contains no Sphagnum Moss harvested from sites of special scientific interest. It is free of chemicals such as herbicides, pesticides or stabilisers as per the EU Fertilising Product Regulations July 2019.

The compost we use contains between 10% to 20% composted pine bark. the total we use is 11 tons.

At present the main ongoing use of the compost is to ensure and assist with the growth rate and quality of plant stock.

Peat based alternative tends to be largely alkaline based, which depending on the variety of plant can promote or delay growth and development.

Using alternatives can be problematic as the compost we use is multi-purpose which ensures all plants no matter what variety have consistent growth to ensure availability for our scheduled planting borough wide from mid-May each season.

Our in-house compost trials which happened 5 years ago which included some from a locally sourced recycled soil, was made up with a high percentage of bark, wood and coconut fibre.

The trial ended with very poor results on plant propagation, growth and size, along with the general standard of plants, some which were not at our expected standard and had to be replaced.

Also 3 out of 4 trial materials required manual sieving to enable it to be manageable to use in smaller sized potting trays and containers.

We believe since then materials have improved therefore we have planned to have a material trial again, firstly within the shrub, grasses and our tree stock and then the use of alternatives for our Autumn and Winter bedding 2021.

The evaluation of the trials can then be used to assess future use.

By way of supplementary Mr Kent asked of the Council would engage with their suppliers to further decrease the use of peat and encourage the use of alternatives and reduction in carbon emissions.

Councillor Nockolds confirmed that was the aim.

C:132 **CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**

i **Business Development - Councillor G Middleton**

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

Councillor Middleton presented his report and explained that the public realm meeting was to look at what pieces of land to include into bids. He responded to questions on the key desirables of the Town Investment Plan, confirming that the school of nursing was a big part of the plan for King's Lynn, increasing the skills for the area, along with other plans, where the Government decisions were still awaited. He confirmed the Council was working with local stakeholders throughout the process.

In response to a question on the status of the Future High Streets Fund Councillor Middleton confirmed that the Government's decision had still to be published, but as soon as he knew he would let councillors know.

In response to a question on the signage to be provided under the Tourism Support Package Councillor Middleton confirmed it was in line with what had been recommended in the Wayne Hemingway review. He also confirmed that the refurbishment of Heacham toilets had been put forward, and that any suggestions for siting of benches were welcome.

In response to questions Councillor Middleton confirmed the council was working hard to deliver a relief road for the East of King's Lynn.

ii **Climate Change & Commercial Services - Councillor P Kunes**

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

Councillor Kunes presented his report. In response to questions he confirmed that with the assistance of community groups 550 new trees had been planted to date, and a further large area was being identified

for many more. He confirmed that discussions were taking place with community and other groups on the issue of trees.

Councillor Kunes also confirmed that with regard to seeking expertise in bio diversity, advice could be sought from a number of partner organisations.

In response to a request to assist local firms to get onto the Green Homes Grant approved list Councillor Kunes undertook to do what he could including taking it up with the local MP.

With regard to GDPR and data handling dealt with by a “contractor”, Councillor Kunes suggested the Councillor provide him with the additional information they held.

Following a point made regarding common agricultural policy for west Norfolk, Councillor Kunes suggested the information be emailed to him.

In response to a question on the public transport system, Councillor Kunes confirmed that he felt it should be better but acknowledged that it would be difficult to encourage people to leave their cars.

iii **Development - Councillor R Blunt**

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Councillor Blunt presented his report and in response to a question declined to comment on the Parkway application as it was due to be considered by the planning Committee in the new year. He confirmed that any points on where Town Fund money was spend, points made should be address to Cabinet when they considered the item.

With regard to a question on proposed development at West Winch, Councillor Blunt re-iterated that traffic from the development would have to come off a roundabout.

Councillor Blunt also confirmed that with the slow down in building during the year due to Covid, lobbying of the Government was taking place to try to ease the housing completion targets set centrally.

iv **Environmental Services & Public Protection - Councillor S Dark**

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

Councillor Dark presented his report and publically thanked all the officers who were working hard during the lockdown and councillors for assisting in disseminating information.

Councillor Dark undertook to send to all councillors the recycling rates and the waste arising per capita. He confirmed that recycling was still

taking place and that the plastics sought in the green bins had a market. Those plastics not recyclable that were put into the green bins were used in the making of cement to replace fossil fuel.

Councillor Dark reminded members of the changes in bin collection dates over the Christmas period. He confirmed that the food waste collections were still suspended due to the need to ensure the safety of the collection crews. He also confirmed that the borough was playing a full part as covid marshalls assisting people to comply with guidance to ensure they had a safe shopping experience. Following a question on Marshalls for Downham Market, Councillor Dark confirmed that the Chief Executive held discussions with the Town Council.

In response to a question on what involvement the Council had with the covid vaccine and its arrival in west Norfolk, Councillor Dark confirmed that this was being dealt with by the CCG and NHS England, but it had been involved with setting up the walk in test centre in Kings' Lynn, and anything else to help. He also confirmed the live data re covid cases was available from Public Health England.

v **Housing - Councillor A Lawrence**

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Councillor Lawrence presented his report, and in response to a question regarding the siting of accommodation pods in North Lynn he confirmed that if the planning application was refused they would look to a different site.

In response to a question on Council owned housing companies, Councillor Lawrence confirmed that a report would go to a Panel in the new year.

Following a question on partnership working with Freebridge Housing when tenants had issues with the property, Councillor Lawrence suggested that the tenants report their problems direct to Freebridge when they occurred.

vi **Project Delivery - Councillor P Gidney**

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

Councillor Gidney presented his report. In response to a question he undertook to find out whether the s106 contributions from the development at Salters Road King's Lynn would go to improve the Edma Street play area.

At 18.26 the meeting adjourned til 18.36.

vii **Deputy Leader and Culture, Heritage and Health - Councillor Mrs E Nockolds**

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Councillor Mrs Nockolds presented her report and updated her meeting attendances.

In response to questions on the allocation of funding for tourism in Hunstanton, Councillor Nockolds confirmed that the business support for covid across the Borough was £500,000, and that the Government were promoting the marketing of Norfolk and Suffolk in a tourism zone.

With regard to a question on the TIC in Hunstanton Councillor Nockolds confirmed there would be fresh talks on the subject, and also drew attention to the number of visitors to the visitwestnorfolk website. She reminded members that all businesses in Hunstanton were ambassadors for the area.

With regard to a question on the local cycling infrastructure plan Councillor Nockolds confirmed that there were over 400 responses and drew attention to where additional things needed to be done. Norfolk County Council had received government funding for it but not in the rural area. She confirmed that when the results of the town deal bid were received Councillor Middleton would let members know.

Councillor Nockolds confirmed that the Corn Exchange cinema was about to re-open.

In response to a question on the support given for a new hospital for the area Councillor Nockolds confirmed she met with the Deputy Chief Executive of the hospital and the Borough Chief Executive met with the Hospital Chief Executive regularly, a campaign had been discussed and support would be offered. She also responded on the issue of a multi-storey car park at the hospital being very expensive.

Following a point raised about doctors surgeries in King's Lynn, Councillor Nockolds undertook to discuss it at her next health meeting.

viii **Leader and Resources - Councillor B Long**

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Councillor Long presented his report. He responded to a question on the introduction of the collection of garden waste for free and confirmed it would cost the Council considerably and would hope to see new burdens payments to cover the losses.

In response to a question on the award of a staff pay rise Councillor Long responded that if it was feasible he would like to be able to support it. He also confirmed his support for the covid vaccine. In

response to a request Councillor Lone agreed to add more financial information into his Council report.

C:133 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

None

C:134 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i **Cabinet - 22 September 2020 and Cabinet Members Decision - 27 October 2020**

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Councillor Long proposed CAB171 – Review of Standing Orders and Articles

Cabinet Members Decision on Standing Orders amendments.

Councillor Moriarty raised a point of order that it was less than six months since the matter had last been considered. The Monitoring Officer deemed that the consideration of the specific items re remote meetings were not a review of all standing orders but a bespoke piece of work to incorporate the new legislation.

The proposal from Councillor Long was seconded by Councillor Nockolds with a minor amendment to include the word “working” in standing order 14.2 b so it read “seven clear working days”.

Councillor Moriarty challenged that the Cabinet member recommendations and amendment had not been considered by Cabinet as required in the Articles.

The Monitoring Officer informed Council that the minor amendment proposed was due to drafting error, which the Monitoring Officer would amend as required.

Council debated the recommendations.

Councillor Moriarty proposed that standing order 11 2a be removed from the recommendations, which Councillor Long challenged as negating the original proposal. The Monitoring Officer agreed that it did negate the proposal but Councillor Moriarty challenged this assessment. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that she would consider this Point of Order further and confirm her final assessment.

Councillor Howman proposed continuing to sit, seconded by Councillor Lawton. At 19.36 the Council took a vote on whether to continue to sit, the vote was lost and the meeting closed.

The following items of business would be considered at the next Council meeting:

Cabinet recommendations 22 September 2020 CAB 171 Standing Orders and Articles and Cabinet Member recommendations.

Cabinet recommendations from 17 November 2020

CAB193: Statement of Licensing Policy

CAB194: Covid 19 Response and Recovery Plan

CAB197: Scheme of Delegation

Notices of Motion 6,7,and 8/20.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm