

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

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 8th April, 2021 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, C Morley, S Nash, E Nockolds, T Parish, S Patel, J Ratcliffe, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, C Sampson, S Sandell, S Squire, M Storey, A Tyler, D Tyler, D Whitby and M Wilkinson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Moriarty and Mrs V Spikings

C:160 **PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by Rev Canon Ling.

C:161 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C:162 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Long declared a prejudicial interest in CAB247, Salters Road as a Board Member at Freebridge Community Housing. He confirmed he had not participated in discussions at Cabinet or Freebridge meetings. He was not present for consideration of the item.

C:163 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

C:164 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None

C:165 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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

Question from Mr Eagle read on his behalf.

"What is the Borough Council policy in respect of houses in the Borough which have been left unoccupied for a long period of time and are now in such a state that they are no longer fit for habitation."

Thank you for your question Mr Eagle.

On the question of our approach to derelict buildings, these fall into two categories:

1. Derelict and empty; and
2. Derelict and occupied

For the derelict and empty buildings these are looked at through the derelict land and buildings group which have successfully brought a number of derelict houses back into use. Unfortunately, this is often a long and difficult process and owners have the opportunity to challenge the valuation of the buildings which introduces risk to the council.

The second category of building is the derelict but occupied property which is often more difficult to deal with. In these cases, the courts are reluctant to allow the Council to take someone's home and any interventions are therefore across a range of Departments.

A supplementary question as follows was asked:

"Does the Council use its powers to charge additional Council Tax on house which are left empty for extended periods"

Councillor Long gave the following response: We charge additional council tax for properties which are registered as empty and unfurnished. The extra charge depends on how long the property is left empty for:

Up to 2 years – no additional charge (pay 100% council tax)
 2-5 years – an extra 100% charge
 5-10 years – an additional 200% charge
 10 years + - an additional 300% charge

C:166 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i **Cabinet: 16 March 2021**

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

Councillor Long proposed CAB245: Draft standing order 11.2a - referral back from Cabinet to Council, this was seconded by Councillor Nockolds. It was noted that recommendation 10 in the minute encouraging the questioning of Cabinet members in Panel meetings was for noting, not inclusion in the standing orders.

Council debated the recommendations and on being put to the vote they were approved.

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

Councillor Long left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Councillor Nockolds proposed CAB247: Salters Road, King's Lynn, which was seconded by Councillor Lawrence. Council debated the recommendations including the finances of the proposals and on being put to the vote the recommendations were approved.

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

Councillor Long proposed CAB248: Southend Road, Hunstanton, seconded by Councillor Nockolds. Council debated the recommendations and sought advice on the involvement in a decision where a matter was to be considered by the planning Committee in due course. Members were advised that it was for individual members to decide if they were conflicted in taking a decision, but it was possible to separate their role in Panels of Council with a Planning role. On being put to the vote the recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED: The recommendations from the Cabinet meeting of 16 March 2021 were approved.

Council adjourned at 6.03 pm and re-convened at 6.10 pm.

C:167 **CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**

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

Following the approval of CAB245 Draft Standing Order 11.2a, Councillor Long presented all Cabinet Members reports together. Questions were asked of Cabinet Members by Councillors in the following order as set out in the new standing order:

Independent, Labour, Non Aligned and Conservative.

Councillor Nockolds answered questions on the effect on the area and the facilities available for those participating in wild camping which was being encouraged by the government. Attention was drawn to the liaison being carried out by the Police and County Council on parking along the coastline, she presumed suitable licenses would have to be obtained. To assist people in the Hunstanton area a paramedic was situated in Hunstanton to ensure faster response than from King's Lynn.

Councillor Kunes responded to questions on Gayton Road cemetery and confirmed that investigations were being undertaken to provide land for a new cemetery. He undertook to provide detail on the reasoning behind soil being added to graves at Gayton Road cemetery.

Councillor Kunes gave an update on the decarbonisation funding of almost £4m which had been awarded to the Council from the Government.

Councillors Nockolds and Middleton responded to questions relating to movement of the Men's Shed accommodation which was provided free for them by the Council.

Councillor Gidney responded to questions on the proposed Parkway scheme and the planting of trees, he confirmed that the mitigation proposals were planting 3 trees for every 1 removed along with including reed beds.

Councillor Blunt confirmed that the 2011 core strategy and 2016 site allocations were being used until an Inspector had considered the new documents. He confirmed the 5 year land supply was healthy although the housing delivery test did not reflect the impact of the pandemic.

Councillor Gidney responded to a question on the potential of building of a hospital on new ground and gave project delivery information.

Councillor Lawrence gave updated figures on the Homechoice statistics and confirmed that the only real way to bring the numbers on the list down was to provide more homes.

Councillor Middleton responded to a question on Digital Breckland confirming that the council was helping many small businesses.

Councillor Kunes, in response to a question on urban wildlife, made reference to habitat mitigation work and undertook to provide some information on this. Councillor Gidney confirmed that in the Parkway application some areas would be wild, others managed and would include ponds and boxes for wildlife.

As part of the Leaders questions Councillor Long reminded members that the questions on the finances of NWES had been discussed in exempt session previously but should not be discussed in open session, except that as members were aware arrangements had been made with them to repay their loan..

In response to a comment about eel pathways in waterways, Councillor Long confirmed that the new pumping station being built had a separate pathway for eels.

Following a question on steps taken to promote a positive relationship with the County Council to encourage investment in the Borough, Councillor Long drew attention to the schemes the County Council had

invested in, and confirmed there was a god relationship with the County Council.

Following a question on the retirement of Chief Constable Simon Bailey from Norfolk Police Councillor Long commended Chief Constable Bailey on his long and commendable service to the county and confirmed the new Police and Crime Commissioner would appoint his successor.

In response to a question on whether the building of a new hospital was essential and whether a letter could be sent to Government and the support of parishes sought, Councillor Long confirmed that he was on record making the argument for a new hospital as a matter of urgency, with the growth to the area it needed a new facility to match. All parties supported the approach.

C:168 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

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

Councillor Crofts as Chair of Planning Committee was asked a question on the calling in of planning applications, to which he confirmed it was useful for them to be on planning grounds.

In response to a question on the timing of the reconvened Planning Meeting the following week, Councillor Crofts confirmed he had taken Councillor Joyce's suggestion to defer. The reconvened meeting was decided upon as a suitable date shortly after the deferment.

Councillor Collingham as Chair of the Regeneration and Development Panel was asked about the Council being lead sponsor for new Doctors surgeries. In response Councillor Collingham drew attention to the fact that it was the responsibility of the CCG to provide those facilities, but she would consider adding it to the panel work programme in the future.

Councillor Crofts as Chair of Planning responded to a question on not speaking to the public whilst on site visits.

Councillor Sampson was asked to consider the impact of pop up camping sites at Environment and Community Panel. Councillor Collingham confirmed it was already on the Regeneration and Development work programme.

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm