

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 29th October, 2015 at 6.30 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor C Manning (Chairman)
 Councillors B Ayres, L Bambridge, R Bird, R Blunt, A Bubb, Mrs S Buck, Mrs J Collingham, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, P Colvin, N Daubney, I Devereux, Mrs S Fraser, P Gidney, G Hipperson, P Hodson, M Hopkins, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, M Howland, H Humphrey, C Joyce, C Kittow, P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Long, G McGuinness, G Middleton, J Moriarty, A Morrison, Mrs E Nockolds, M Peake, D Pope, P Rochford, C Sampson, Miss S Sandell, M Shorting, T Smith, Mrs V Spikings, Mrs S Squire, M Storey, A Tyler, D Tyler, Mrs E Watson, Mrs J Westrop, D Whitby, A White, Mrs M Wilkinson, T Wing-Pentelow, Mrs A Wright and Mrs S Young

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Anota, P Beal, A Beales, Mrs C Bower, C Crofts, I Gourlay, R Groom, Lord Howard, Mrs K Mellish, J M Tilbury and G Wareham

C:43 **PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by the Mayor's Chaplain Father Ling

C:44 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C:45 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were none.

C:46 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor wished to pass on best wishes from the Council to Councillor Gourlay who had recently been hospitalised but was now home to recover.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Sandra Buck who had recently been awarded her Ba Hons from Anglia Ruskin University at a ceremony he had attended as Mayor.

C:47 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None

C:48 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None

C:49 CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**i Culture Heritage and Health - Councillor Mrs E Nockolds**

Councillor Mrs Nockolds presented her report. Councillor Smith asked if the County Council's financial cuts would affect the Borough's museums. Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that the Council currently had a Service Level Agreement with the County Council which sets out the Council's requirements for a sum of money paid, including outreach work with the community and free entry between October and March to encourage local people to visit the museums. She further informed Members that she expected consultation on the budget to feature on the next Museums meeting she attended. The Stories of Lynn at the Town Hall was funded for four years.

Councillor J Collop asked if the rumours he had heard regarding the garage for the Mayor's car having to be pulled down were correct. Councillor Nockolds explained that it had been noted that the bricks it was built with were not in keeping with the Town Hall building, so a new outer skin was being built with suitable bricks.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson asked what the cost of the additional work to the garage was, to which Councillor Mrs Nockolds informed Members that the bricks were an additional £8,000, but discussions were taking place with the contractors. Councillor J Collop asked who was responsible for the error to which it was reiterated that discussions were ongoing with the contractors.

Councillor A Tyler asked if the King's Lynn Festival was thriving and whether they planned to do any work with young people or those with disabilities. Councillor Mrs Nockolds confirmed that she attended the Festival Board meeting regularly and it was doing well with a number of overseas visitors attending this year, and a number of concerts sold out of all tickets. She informed Members that the Festival was working with Alive Leisure to work with the Groups mentioned.

Councillor Mrs Spikings congratulated Councillor Mrs Nockolds on the excellent National reporting of the town's Lumieres which along with the town itself had been praised very recently. She drew attention to the number of people in the town centre after dark to see the light displays and the number discussing the programme of events King's Lynn had been offering. Councillor Mrs Nockolds drew attention to the fact that as well as being advertised locally, the light displays were

being advertised on trains from London, Classic FM and the Visit England Web site, all of which had been successful.

Councillor J Collop asked what information was available for Members on the performance of Alive Leisure. Councillor Mrs Nockolds responded that in her last report she had referred to the Alive Leisure AGM on 29 September which had been a meeting open to the public, where their annual report had been presented. The report which was open to the public set out the information on how the Trust was performing. A report from the Trust was also being made to a Panel meeting in November which any Member could attend. Councillor A Tyler asked if there was a mechanism where Councillors could be informed in advance that the information from the Trust was available so it wasn't missed. Councillor Mrs Nockolds responded that the Trust operated in the same way as any other Trust and that if Members had specific questions they could email her with them or read its annual report.

ii **Coastal and Tourism - Councillor P Beal**

The Mayor reminded Members that Councillor Beal had resigned his position on the Cabinet, therefore any questions should be directed to the Leader.

iii **Development - Councillor R Blunt**

Councillor Blunt presented his report. There were no questions.

iv **Environment - Councillor B Long**

Councillor Long presented his report. Councillor A Tyler referred to the fly tipping in the Bawsey drain within his ward which he had raised at the last meeting and which had improved since that time, he asked for Councillor Long's observations on it from his recent visit. Councillor Long confirmed he had looked at the site and spoken to the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) about the fly tipping. He drew attention to the importance of keeping the drain clear to help prevent flooding to the surrounding houses, the IDB had not changed their maintenance regime, but the incidences of fly tipping had increased. He also drew attention to the fact that the alleyways in North End had an ongoing issue with people leaving rubbish in them. He informed Members that as the soft approach had not worked he was working with officers to look to take enforcement action on those responsible, which was often the householder in the vicinity.

Councillor Bird asked if information could be provided on the complex issue of the funding of flood defence and water matters and the fact that the Government rarely fully funded flood defence programmes because he had been present when some misleading information had

been given on the issue. Councillor Long responded that there was often misunderstanding about how the finances worked. Grant in aid was utilised across Norfolk whilst working with the Environment Agency on a 6 year capital programme for schemes coming forward. He offered to request officers to brief Members at a Panel meeting or such like should Members wish him to do so.

Councillor Mrs Collop asked if food waste bags would continue to be sold at the Council offices, if so would there be an increase in price, and if so by how much. Councillor Long confirmed that it was the intention that a variety of outlets would continue to sell food waste bags, which were sold at cost and would continue to be sold on that basis. Councillor J Collop made reference to a recent meeting where it had been said they would be sold with the cost of selling them included and asked how much they would go up by. Councillor Long confirmed "at cost" included the cost of selling them and the price should reflect that, but market prices determined the cost of the bags which were much higher priced in the supermarkets.

In relation to the fly tipping in North Lynn, Councillor J Collop asked what was meant by direct enforcement, to which Councillor Long explained that it was the last course of action where people were causing their neighbours to experience conditions which were unacceptable, and it meant fining people when they dumped rubbish where they shouldn't by way of a fixed penalty fine once evidence was collected to prove who was responsible.

Councillor Smith asked for an update on the County Council proposal to close the Docking Recycling Centre. Councillor Long made reference to the meeting which had taken place at the County Council the previous month which agreed to close the centre. He informed Members that the overall proposals included reducing the hours of all centres except Mile Cross in Norwich. He considered this unfair to the rural areas as people generally had to travel a distance to reach the recycling centre, which would be considerable distance further if Docking was closed. He proposed to object to the proposal when it came before the County Full Council meeting in the budget.

v

Housing and Community - Councillor A Lawrence

Councillor Lawrence presented his report. Councillor McGuinness asked if the Portfolio Holder shared his concern about the news report that the Purfleet Trust was in financial difficulty, and asked if there was anything the Borough Council could do for the homeless and food bank affected. Councillor Lawrence confirmed he had been most concerned with the news, he reminded Members of the delegated decision he had taken in recent months to help the Trust. He informed Members that the Council had met with the Purfleet Trust and their situation was not as bad as that portrayed in the press, but help had been provided to assist them in applying for other funding streams and encouraging

them to ask for donations from other bodies it worked with. He confirmed the Council would continue to work with the Trust as they did valuable work.

Councillor J Collop asked if the Council could be doing any more to encourage bringing back into use long term empty properties. Councillor Lawrence referred to the Long Term Empty Property Strategy which was aimed at bringing those properties back into use, and explained that the Council had been talking to landlords and owners to encourage it, but the decision was down to the owner of the property, so the best advice was given wherever possible.

Councillor A Tyler made reference to comments he had received from some constituents that they felt they weren't dealt with fairly in relation to when they applied for larger accommodation as it took a long time to be successful. He asked if staff could make it clearer that the wait was because of the shortage of available houses. Councillor Lawrence responded that the system was set out clearly and people were given a priority and informed accordingly. He invited Councillor Tyler to submit any evidence of people being treated unfairly.

vi **ICT, Leisure and Public Space - Councillor D Pope**

Councillor Pope presented his report. Councillor Bird asked if the Lawn Tennis Association would be advised to go to Hunstanton where there were already tennis courts available, rather than Lynnsport. Councillor Pope responded that the proposal for tennis courts at Lynnsport was because people who lived near or south and west of King's Lynn would not necessarily want to travel to Hunstanton but Lynnsport.

Councillor McGuinness asked if the keypads on parking metres to input registrations was to be brought back into use; what the progress of paying by mobile for parking was and what progress there was on ensuring the Vancouver car park was referred to as such throughout the town rather than the old cattle market. Councillor Pope responded that he had believed that the Vancouver car park issue had been dealt with and would ensure it was done so. The pay by phone should be in operation the following week, and the keypads had been changed so should be useable. The system was being used in the free parking slots without difficulty. He confirmed he was looking into reinstating their use.

vii **Special Projects - Councillor Lord Howard**

The Mayor informed Councillors that as Councillor Lord Howard was not able to be present at the meeting, any questions could be submitted to him on email.

viii **Deputy Leader and Regeneration and Industrial Assets - Councillor A Beales**

The Mayor informed Councillors that as Councillor Beales was not able to be present at the meeting, any questions could be submitted to him on email.

ix **Leader and Resources - Councillor N Daubney**

Councillor Daubney presented his report. Councillor A Tyler asked if in times of diminishing budgets the Leader would continue to press for improvements to rail services to the Borough. Councillor Daubney confirmed he would continue to do so by playing a full role in with Partners to be the best in the region.

Councillor J Collop asked what the timetable was for the Scrutiny Review work following the workshop earlier in the month. Councillor Daubney agreed that it was an important issue and would ensure an outline timetable was provided, but he hoped to see a lot of progress before Christmas.

Councillor J Collop asked why the matter of Devolution considered at the 6 October Cabinet had not come to Council for approval. He also asked that Group Leaders be kept informed on the issue. Councillor Daubney explained that the item which had been considered at that meeting had merely been authorising himself and the Chief Executive to continue discussions and negotiations on the issue, and that any decision on whether to enter into a Devolution agreement would be taken by Full Council, but it hadn't reached that position yet as the Government's position on the proposal was not yet known. He referred to the briefing given to Councillors on the issue prior to Council and agreed to distribute the presentation.

Councillor Bird asked what had become of the Recording of Meetings Task Group which had met pre the election following his original notice of motion to Council, but had not met since that time. Councillor Daubney undertook to look into it and let him know.

Councillor J Collop commented that he thought Councillor Daubney saw the future as "rosy" but that as Council Tax had not increased for many years the Council would now be in a more difficult position with reducing Government grants than others who had increased their taxes over the years. He asked if the Council would now have to increase Council Tax substantially. Councillor Daubney responded that he did not consider the future "rosy", but was proud of the delivery by the Borough Council, and approached the future with confidence because the Council had met its targets, but was not underestimating the size of the challenge ahead. He reminded Members of the manifesto pledge given that Council Tax would not rise above inflation.

Councillor A Tyler asked if the Leader envisaged Members learning how to scrutinise things efficiently. Councillor Daubney responded that the whole point of the review was to ensure that Councillors felt like they had an influence on decisions and participate in policy development in the process.

C:50 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

None

C:51 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i **Cabinet: 6 October 2015**

The recommendation from the meeting on 6 October 2015, CAB68: Honorary Recorder, was proposed by Councillor Daubney and seconded by Councillor Long.

Councillor Morrison drew attention to some improved wording of the Cabinet minute as follows which it was noted did not affect the recommendation:

...and would be held by the most senior judge in the town.
..and he/she would be invited to attend main civic events.

Councillor Daubney confirmed that the Chief Executive would appoint the individual following consultation with the Leader.

RESOLVED: That recommendation CAB68: Honorary Recorder from the 6 October 2015 meeting be approved.

ii **Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: 22 October 2015**

There were no recommendations from Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2015.

C:52 **PROPORTIONALITY**

Council was invited to give consideration to the amendments to proportionality following a change to Group Memberships.

Councillor J Collop proposed that the Labour Group would change one of their seats on a Panel with a proposed Licensing seat of the Independent Group in order to permit Councillor Moriarty to continue with a seat on the panel to the end of the Municipal year. Councillor

Joyce disagreed with this approach as he considered it would require a nem con vote in order to do so. It was explained that the proposal would not affect the overall proportionality of seats each group was entitled to across the Council as a whole, so it was very unlikely that a nem con vote would be required. As a nem con vote would not be supported Councillor Collop agreed to withdraw his amendment.

RESOLVED: 1) That the proportionality be amended in accordance with the table attached with the agenda be agreed and the appropriate membership sought.

2) That the proportionality of 9 Member Task Groups be amended to 7 Conservatives, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

The meeting closed at 7.47 pm