

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK****COUNCIL****Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 28th January, 2016 at 6.30 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market  
Place, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:** The Mayor, Councillor C Manning (Chairman)  
Councillors B Anota, B Ayres, L Bambridge, P Beal, A Beales, R Bird, R Blunt,  
Mrs C Bower, A Bubb, Mrs S Buck, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, P Colvin, C Crofts,  
N Daubney, Mrs S Fraser, P Gidney, R Groom, G Hipperson, P Hodson,  
M Hopkins, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, Lord Howard, M Howland, C Joyce,  
P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Long, Mrs K Mellish, 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,  
J M Tilbury, A Tyler, D Tyler, G Wareham, Mrs E Watson, Mrs J Westrop,  
D Whitby, Mrs M Wilkinson, T Wing-Pentelow and Mrs S Young

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Collingham,  
I Devereux, I Gourlay, H Humphrey, G McGuinness, A White and Mrs A Wright

**C:65 PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by the Mayors Chaplain, Father Ling.

**C:66 MINUTES SILENCE FOR THE LATE HONORARY ALDERMEN  
JULYAN ANSELL AND JOHN ROPER**

Council held a minutes silence for the late Honorary Aldermen Julyan Ansell and John Roper who sadly passed away since the last Council meeting.

**C:67 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**C:68 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh declared an interest under item C72: Determination of Council Tax Discounts relating to second homes and empty properties, under S106 of the Local Government and Finance Act. He did not vote thereon.

Councillor Daubney declared a personal interest in item CAB112 Proposed Surgery Development.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson declared a personal interest in item CAB112 Proposed Surgery Development.

C:69 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that he had sent Christmas wishes to Her Majesty the Queen, and received a response.

The Mayor also reported that he had send messages of congratulations on the Honours list awards to Sir Henry Bellingham MP and Mr David Gifford who had been involved with the Talking Books for the blind for a large number of years.

C:70 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

C:71 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Mayor invited Mr Michael de Whalley forward to ask his public question:

"How confident is this Council concerning West Norfolk's preparedness, in light of the EA's admission that a "complete rethink" of the UK's flood defences is required, after the recent flooding in Cumbria, Lancashire and Yorkshire. These are areas that have significantly invested in their flood defences which they believed to be of a high standard."

Councillor Long responded as follows:

"Across the Borough we have a number of acknowledged flood risks, the incidents recently in Cumbria and the North of England were pluvial occurrences, whilst it is not impossible for any area to flood as a result of a rain event such as this, West Norfolk is a far drier area of the country and the river catchment of the Great Ouse is far wider and has had far more infrastructure in place on it than some of the faster flowing narrower rivers in the areas in question.

As Council is aware many millions of pounds have been invested locally by our partners including Drainage Boards, The Environment Agency and Middle Level Commissioners in order to deal with water that falls onto the whole river catchment.

In West Norfolk we are aware that our biggest risk comes from the sea, such as the December 2013 tidal surge

This tidal surge was estimated as a 1 in 1,000 year occurrence at King's Lynn and 1 in 250 year at Hunstanton. At King's Lynn the tide was recorded at 6.17m.

This was the first time the King's Lynn flood defences had been subjected to such a high tide since they were constructed in the 1980s.

The defences prevented flooding during the most significant tidal surge in 60 years protecting thousands of properties from King's Lynn to Hunstanton.

- Since the December 2013 tidal surge the Environment Agency carried out a substantial programme of repairs. Over £3.1m has been spent on repairs and improvements. Our defences are now as good, or better, than they were before the surge.

Work includes the following:

- Repairs to the shingle defences between Heacham and Snettisham at a cost of £128,000. The shingle embankment has been fully reinstated and now provides the same level of protection as it did prior to the Tidal Surge.
- The refurbishment of the defences in King's Lynn has been completed at a cost of £1,200,000. This investment will ensure the defences are in the best condition to defend the town for another 40 years.
- In addition to the King's Lynn flood gates the Environment Agency has spent £1,200,000 repairing and refurbishing defences along the coastline between King's Lynn and Hunstanton and the Tidal River Embankments.

My conclusion is that we and our partners are not just confident in our systems they have been tested and improved, no one can ever say an area won't flood, it would be foolish, however I believe the "complete rethink" has happened, and been tested."

As a supplementary, Mr de Whalley asked what adaptations to design in dwellings could be expected to minimise the impact of and occupants exposure to flooding?

Councillor Long responded that others would probably be better placed to give detail on that, but the Regional Flooding Coastal Committee had allocated an additional £50,000 to assist with any individual flood events. He offered to meet with Mr de Whalley to show him some of the work carried out in the area, including considerable investment in new pumps by the Drainage Boards. Mr de Whalley accepted this invitation.

The Mayor thanked Mr de Whalley for his question and then invited Ms Jo Rust forward to ask her question as follows:

"On Monday night I and others slept rough on the streets of King's Lynn to raise awareness of the plight of those who have no permanent home. It is widely feared that we will face increased levels of homeless with the introduction of Universal Credit when those in receipt of benefits receive it all in one go. What steps does the council have in place to help those who live in supported housing of the type provided by the Genesis Housing Association, the Benjamin Foundation and the

Purfleet Trust when Universal Credit is introduced, giving the benefit claimant direct access to housing allowance which previously went directly to the housing provider?"

Councillor Lawrence responded as follows: "The planned sleep out was arranged by Genesis Housing and although not clearly worded on the flyer it was in relation to planned cost savings by Norfolk County Council in Supporting People funding. This funding is used to pay for the specialist support that is provided in Genesis Housing, The Purfleet Trust and The Benjamin Foundation.

We have been advised that supported housing will be exempt from universal credit meaning that housing benefit will still be payed direct to the provider. This may be reviewed in 2018 as central government is currently being lobbied for the housing benefit to be paid as it is, direct to the provider."

By way of supplementary Ms Rust commented that the response that those who provided supported accommodation would get the payment direct was contrary to what the housing providers believed. She asked what plans were in place when the providers were faced with closure.

Councillor Lawrence responded that that was the advice officers had received from Government, so the understanding was that until things were rolled out it would stay the same way until 2018.

C:72

#### **DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS RELATING TO SECOND HOMES AND EMPTY PROPERTIES FOR 2016/2017**

In supporting this item, Councillor J Collop asked why it hadn't been done before. Councillor Daubney explained that the Council had negotiated with the County Council previously so it would retain a larger element of the money in order to spend it in local Partnership work, for example the work put in to help improve educational attainment. The County Council had identified the additional finances derived through this process to assist with their budget deficit, but had concluded that the current agreement on the split of the money would continue for 2 years, after which it would be reviewed.

Councillor Daubney further explained that until now offering the 5% discount enabled the identification of second homes, but the view was that this would be forgone, whilst the current information could be retained in the short term.

**RESOLVED:** That, 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 and

the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 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 2016/2017;
2. That the council tax discount for second homes as defined by Class B of the Regulations is set at 0% for 2016/2017;
3. That the council tax discount for empty dwellings defined as being within Class C of the Regulations is set at the following for 2016/2017:
  - a. 100% for three months starting on the day the property becomes unfurnished
  - b. 0% once the three month period has expired;
4. That the council tax discount for uninhabitable dwellings defined as being within Class D of the Regulations is set at the following for 2016/2017:
  - a. 50% for 12 months starting on the day the property becomes uninhabitable
  - b. 0% once the 12 month period has expired;
- 5 That the levy rate for Long Term Empty Properties as defined in the Regulations is set at 50% for 2016/2017;
- 6 That any period of occupation of less than six weeks shall be disregarded when calculating the maximum period of a reduction or the start date of the levy; and
- 7 That delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Resources in consultation with the Ward Member and the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Panel to consider individual applications to the Discretionary Hardship Fund
- 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:73 **CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**

### i **Culture Heritage and Health - Councillor Mrs E Nockolds**

Councillor Nockolds presented her report. Councillor S Collop asked where she could see the minutes of the Mart Set Up meeting held as the original Task Group had not been recalled, she asked if a town centre Councillor had been invited to the meeting. Councillor J Collop also made reference to town Councillors being invited. Councillor Mrs

Nockolds explained that the meeting was purely operational with her as Cabinet Member being the only Member present, along with Operational Managers, the Showman's Guild and the blue light services in order to make final arrangements on timings and placements prior to the Guild pulling onto site.

Councillor J Collop commented that he didn't know much about the operation of the Alive Leisure Trust for the year, he felt Councillors didn't have enough information on the detail. He asked for Councillors to be issued with more information. Councillor Nockolds reminded Councillor Collop of the response she had previously given of the Trust reporting to the Review Panel on its operations, and the ability for any member of the public to attend the Trust's AGM and access their report. She explained that the Council still maintained the buildings and paid the utilities costs.

Councillor A Tyler, in referring to the leaflet stand now available in the railway station, asked if any of the new style West Norfolk Holiday Guides would be put into the rack for travelling passengers. Councillor Mrs Nockolds confirmed that discussions were taking place with the Station staff in relation to this.

Councillor A Tyler also asked if the Cabinet Member was pleased with the news that improvements were being made to the rail stock on the King's Lynn line. Councillor Mrs Nockolds confirmed it was very good news, and that in the coming month the Leader was due to meet with Network Rail on train matters.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson asked if there was any more information on the additional costs incurred due to the brick changes required on the Civic garage. Councillor Mrs Nockolds responded that as far as she remembered no additional costs would be incurred by the Council.

ii **Development - Councillor R Blunt**

Councillor Blunt presented his report. There were no questions.

iii **Environment - Councillor B Long**

Councillor Long presented his report. Councillor A Tyler drew attention to the ongoing issue of rubbish being dumped in the Bawsey drain, and the fact that half of the drain had been cleared. Councillor Long undertook to draw the IDB's attention to this, and commented that the people who were dumping into the drain were potentially putting themselves and others at risk of flooding.

Councillor S Collop asked why the SNAP meetings did not appear to be rotating their chairmanship as she had identified in King's Lynn, and what was happening regarding a review of those meetings. Councillor Long responded that the rotation of the Chairs was at the discretion of

the individuals. He explained that an annual meeting was held with the Police and CSNN and the Chairmen to review how the SNAPs were working. Notes of the meeting could be made available if members wished.

Councillor S Collop made reference to apparent gaps in delivery of the Christmas timetable for refuse collections as she had not had one delivered and several people she had spoken to also had not. Councillor Long undertook to look into this, he reminded Members that this information was also available on the website. But the arrangements also now meant that a collection was always after the original date so bins if left would be picked up shortly after.

Councillor J Collop asked what the procedure was for the recovery of brown bins. Councillor Long explained that if payment was not made for the bin, the refuse team would arrange for collection of it.

Councillor Moriarty asked if, with the grant money received for recycling initiatives, some information could be provided graphically on the levels of recycling being achieved. Councillor Long agreed to look into this for the future.

iv **Housing and Community - Councillor A Lawrence**

Councillor Lawrence presented his report. In referring to the matter of begging which was in the report, Councillor J Collop asked if there was a difference between begging and busking when it came to the advice of where to give donations. Councillor A Tyler also commented that if the beggar wasn't known there was no way of knowing the real need of the individual. Councillor Lawrence clarified that the posters referred to related only to beggars, and they encouraged anyone who was minded to donate to the homeless to do so via bonafide charities or housing providers where the money was put directly to providing help and support for the homeless. He informed Members that King's Lynn Councillors had recently been out on the streets with officers, and gave the example of an individual who had been put in touch with those organisations who would provide him with help.

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

Councillor Pope presented his report and informed Members that the increase in the final footfall figure in the report should be 7.6%, not 2.29%.

Councillor Squires asked if there had been any feedback on the Pantomime this year as her children had enjoyed it. Councillor Pope confirmed that that initially there had been some concern about other competition or that Robin Hood was an unusual choice, but it had been very well received.

Councillor S Collop drew attention to a screen not working in the bus station, which Councillor Pope suggested could have been reported at the time.

vi **Special Projects - Councillor Lord Howard**

Councillor Lord Howard presented his report. Councillor A Tyler asked what reaction had been received by the Railway Operators to the suggestion of planters. Councillor Lord Howard explained it was an initial meeting with the borough's representative before speaking to the Railway.

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

Councillor Beales presented his report. In response to a question from Councillor Moriarty, Councillor Beales undertook, subject to the being able to release the information that he would provide Members with the progress information on the roll out of Better Broadband for Norfolk.

Councillor A Tyler asked if some information could be provided to ensure the public was aware of what progress was being made on the Marsh Lane Major Housing site. Councillor Beales undertook to provide an update in a similar way to that provided for the NORA development. He also suggested that when the weather improved a site visit for Members may be of interest.

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

Councillor Daubney presented his report. In response to a question from Councillor Bubb on what would be happening with the Arts Centre, Councillor Daubney gave information on the background to the Arts Centre Trust which had recently folded. He wished to thank those who had served on the Trust for their efforts over the past 4 years. He explained that the immediate position was to work closely with the representatives of the Trust in order to assist in the final arrangements in a business-like manner. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the arrangements would consider in due course what to do with the current arts side of the buildings. However, as previously, the Guildhall remained open for hire.

Councillor A Tyler asked if it was likely that similar arts and community events would be provided by the Council. Councillor Daubney reiterated that consideration was being given to its use, and potential for external funding investigated, but that anything done would have to be from within the resources available.



Councillor Tilbury asked if the budget book would be provided to Members in hard copy to ensure transparency for members as he didn't feel it was so looking at such a large document electronically. Councillor Daubney undertook to discuss with colleagues the best way of presenting the report, which he acknowledged was a complicated document, but he drew attention to the detailed presentation which had been given at the recent Panel meeting.

Councillor S Collop asked if there was any update on the school performances in the area. Councillor Daubney undertook to try to get some information for Members.

C:74 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

C:75 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i **Cabinet - 1 December 2015**

Councillor Daubney, seconded by Councillor Beales proposed the following recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 1 December 2015:

CAB93: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendation be approved.

ii **Cabinet - 12 January 2016**

Councillor Daubney, seconded by Councillor Beales proposed the recommendations from the Cabinet Meeting on 12 January 2016:

In relation to **CAB103: Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/2017**, Councillor J Collop stated that he would not support the recommendation, as debated at the Resources and Performance Panel. He expressed concern about the level of response to the consultation, and suggested that the information available should show what effect it would have on individuals. He considered other Councils gave better deals.

Councillor Beales reminded Members that officers had explained the processes gone through as part of the consultation and that they had updated it and changed it to try to engage people, but still no responses had been received. He urged any suggestions on how it could be done better to be passed on.

Councillor Joyce asked if the Council's own departments had been consulted in as far as if it had shown any increase in the levels or arrears defaults to the landlords, and rising in court summons.

Councillor Daubney confirmed that all available data was used in putting together the plan, and that in making the proposal it protected the vulnerable such as the elderly, disabled and those with small children.

In being put to the vote the recommendations were approved.

In relation to **CAB106: Corporate Business Plan 2015/16 - 2018/19**, Councillor J Collop drew attention to the recommendation from the Resources and Performance Panel on the title of the document, which the Cabinet had chosen not to accept. On being put to the vote the recommendation was approved.

The following recommendations were approved without debate:

**CAB105: Draft Smoke And Carbon Monoxide Regulations Report And Statement Of Principles**

**CAB108: Update To The Scheme Of Delegation**

**CAB111: Risk Based Verification Policy Update**

**CAB115: Proposed Acquisition : Land at Wisbech Road**

In debating **CAB112: Proposed Surgery Development - King's Lynn**, as the report on the item was exempt due to the commercially sensitive information contained within it, the Monitoring officer advised that the principles of the item could be discussed in open session, but Members would be stopped if there was a danger of mentioning anything exempt. Councillor J Collop confirmed it was highly likely that the detail discussed would be exempt. Councillor Long proposed exclusion of the press and public, which was agreed.

**RESOLVED:** "That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of CAB112 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act."

The press and public left the meeting.

Council debated the proposal set out in CAB112, and the need in the area for a state of the art doctors surgery to improve on the current premises and provide for the future increase in population for the area. There was unanimous support for the principle of the proposal, but disagreement was aired on the site proposed for the surgery. It was explained that the proposed site was the choice of the surgery and the recommendations involved the deal with the Surgery and the NHS, with any issues raised on the site would be fully dealt with and mitigated at the planning stage.

It was re-iterated that the proposal was a commercial transaction which was the preference for the client.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was approved. Councillor C Joyce wished for his vote against the proposal to be recorded due to the proposed location of the surgery.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations from the Cabinet Meeting on 12 January 2016 be approved.

C:76 **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council was invited to nominate 2 Councillors for the Conservancy Board, and 1 nominee to attend the Sibelco liaison meetings. Councillor Daubney, seconded by Councillor Beales, proposed Councillors B Ayres and C Sampson for the Conservancy Board and Councillor J Moriarty for the Sibelco nomination. This was agreed.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That Councillors Ayres and Sampson be appointed to the Conservancy Board.

2) That Councillor J Moriarty be appointed to the Sibelco Liaison Committee.

C:77 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Mayor invited Councillor Bird to propose Notice of Motion 1/16 below, which was seconded by Councillor Tilbury:

"The Council resolves to initiate, with appropriate other bodies, a comprehensive study of Hunstanton and the adjacent area. This should lead to the formation of a plan for the economic and social development of the area, focussed upon local needs and potential."

In proposing the Motion Councillor Bird drew attention to recent reports which had been published, and was referred to in Councillor Beales' report to Council. Councillor Bird highlighted the fact that those reports showed that Hunstanton's population was reducing, with 41% of it being over 65 and one of the highest levels of incapacity benefit claimants in the country. The high school roll was low, other village schools nearby had closed. With regard to jobs in Hunstanton 40% of them were in the tourist industry, and 82% in the service sector, with the seasonal nature of the visitors to the town being a major drawback. The bus services to the area were not subsidised and did not co-ordinate with the rail timetable. Property prices and rents were high and there was a large number of second homes.

Councillor Bird sought support for the challenges and opportunities to be addressed for the area.

Councillor Daubney proposed that under Standing Order 14.6 the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That the Motion be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

**The meeting closed at 8.25 pm**