

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Tuesday, 29th August, 2023 at 4.30 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillors S Collop (Chair), T Barclay, M Bartrum, P Bland, A Bubb (substitute for H Humphrey), A Bullen, P Devulapalli, P Kunes, S Lintern (substitute for J Bhondi), S Sandell and A Ware.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor M de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor J Moriarty – Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration.

Councillor J Rust – Portfolio Holder for People and Communities.

OFFICERS:

Mark Whitmore – Assistant Director

Ged Greaves – Corporate Performance Manager

Sean Quinn – Housing Standards Manager

EC26: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhondi, Humphrey and Ratcliffe.

EC27: MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EC28: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EC29: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

EC30: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Kemp for all items.

EC31: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EC32: **FAST FOLLOWERS CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT - NORFOLK NET ZERO COMMUNITIES**

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The Corporate Performance Manager presented the report providing an overview of the project and how it might benefit the Borough. It was explained that Norfolk Climate Change Partnership had been awarded funding to finance two-year projects across the County by working with particular communities to help meet net zero targets.

The Corporate Performance Manager explained that all Councillors would be informed of the project and invited to put forward any community projects.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Performance Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley thanked the team involved in working on this project, especially as timescales were tight and a community needed to be identified by September.

Councillor Kunes commented that he would like to see a 'myth busting' exercise carried out, especially in regard to Electric Vehicles and battery recycling.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that green infrastructure was needed including greener transport and the promotion of electric buses along with promotion and helping people to choose greener transport options.

The Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, Councillor Rust informed Councillors that a place-based carbon calculator was available so that Councillors could search for areas, and it could help them on deciding on a community to help through this project.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli asked if there was criteria for the project and the Portfolio Holder explained that a questionnaire and criteria would be produced.

In response to questions, the Corporate Performance Manager clarified that the size of the Community was approximately 5-7,500 people, so a larger Parish, Town or a collaboration of Parishes could be identified.

Councillor Bubb commented that work should be carried out with private landlords and incentives could be offered to those that reduced their carbon footprint. The Portfolio Holder for People and

Communities, Councillor Rust, explained that there were schemes available to retrofit energy efficiency equipment for rented and private homeowners and the Council's Energy Efficiency Officer could provide advice on request and also went out in the community to raise awareness.

Councillor Bullen commented that the provision of advice to local people was important and should be considered. The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley commented that Norfolk Climate Change Partnership was looking at these challenges and commented that the West Norfolk Roadshows set up by the Energy Efficiency Officer had been very well received.

It was clarified that the Council did have an Energy Efficiency Officer who could be contacted for advice and assistance as necessary. Councillor Lintern commented that he had been very helpful within her Parish.

RESOLVED: The Environment and Community Panel noted the project and local climate change activities within their wards were identified and would be considered during the project as appropriate.

EC33: **CABINET REPORT - UPDATE TO VARIOUS HOUSING STANDARDS POLICIES TO REFLECT PROCEDURAL CHANGES, BEST PRACTICE, CASE LAW AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE**

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The Assistant Director presented the Cabinet Report which presented revisions to various policies and procedures to bring them up to date and in line with operational requirements, best practice and relevant legislation and guidance.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Kunes referred to the standards for bedsits, shared accommodation and HMO's and commented that more environmentally friendly methods should be advised, rather than a gas hot water dispenser over the sink. It was explained that this was the minimum standard required as the policies had to ensure that basic standards were in place and there were no hazards, whilst confirming to the Law. Work was carried out with landlords to encourage efficient and environmentally friendly equipment.

Councillor Kunes asked for consideration to be given that gas should not be assumed to be the preferred method of providing heating and therefore, rather than use the work gas, the wording should be amended to encourage environmental friendly heating options.

Officers agreed to look at the wording within the Policy to see if 'gas' could be amended, so that more options were available to landlords.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel supports the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

To approve the adoption of the following changes as detailed within the relevant appendices and consideration be given to the wording within the policy relating to bedsits, shared accommodation and HMO's as raised by Councillor Kunes.

Appendix A

A1) To update the HMO amenity standards previously updated 10 years ago at Council on the 27th September 2012. This update is required in order to provide clarity with regards relevant requirements and to ensure that differing types of HMOs are fully referenced.

A2) To adopt and publish standards with regards single family dwellings in order to provide landlords with a convenient and understandable guidance as to what is expected in private rented properties.

Appendix B

To update the adopted statement of principles with regard civil penalties in accordance with the previously adopted policy (Council - 22nd February 2018) and to adopt the use of Rent Repayment Orders and Banning Orders.

Appendix C

C1) To update the Unauthorised Encampments Protocol to ensure that the protocol reflects the latest legislation applying to unauthorised encampments and to provide the relevant agencies and the wider public with clear guidance as to how the Borough Council and other agencies will respond to, and manage, unauthorised encampments within the local authority area.

Appendix D

D1) Adoption of amendments to the standard single family caravan site licence conditions for relevant protected sites.

D1) Adoption of amendments to the standard multi-site caravan site licence conditions for relevant protected sites.

EC34: PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

EC35: WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Decision List was noted.

EC36: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm