

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes from the Meeting of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee
held on Monday, 29th January, 2024 at 5.15 pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT:

Councillors M Bartrum, F Bone, S Collop, R Colwell, S Everett (Vice-Chair),
D Heneghan, B Jones, A Kemp, J Lowe, J Rust (Chair),
A Ware and M Wilkinson

The Vice-Chair took the Chair until the Chair arrived.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Wilkinson.

Councillors Lowe and Rust (Chair) had advised that they would be late arriving to the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

5 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

6 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

There was no Chair's correspondence to report.

7

JULIE CHAPLIN, HANSEATIC UNION WILL GIVE A BRIEFING ON THE WORK BEING CARRIED OUT WITH THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY AND THE WIDER MIGRANT COMMUNITY.

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The Chair welcomed Julie Chaplin from the Hanseatic Union to the meeting to give an outline of the work being carried out with the Ukrainian community and wider migrant community.

Julie explained that the Hanseatic Union was a charity which had been set up 10 years ago to help to address isolation and the non-interaction between the different parts of the community. The charity decided to put on some activities to bring the communities together and to build up a programme and offer support to help get people into employment. She added that following meetings with clients, there tended to be a theme of issues and need, and so a project was put together to try and meet that need.

She added that over the 10 years the Hanseatic Union had worked with thousands of different Eastern Europeans, different migrant groups and more recently Ukraine's, which was how links had been formed with the Council in relation to the Ukrainian Welcome Centre. Work was also carried out with English people. She added that Eastern Europeans, migrants and refugees tended to be very isolated.

Julie provided some statistics to the Committee in relation to the areas of work which they covered (January 2023 – January 2024) and explained some of the stories behind the statistics and the challenges faced:

- Benefits – 309
- Council Tax - 33
- Housing - 229
- Poverty - 245
- Tribunals – 38

Councillor Rust joined the meeting and took over the Chair.

She explained that in a lot of the cases there was very little that the Charity could do in terms of financial support.

The Chair thanked Julie for the update and then invited questions / comments from the Committee, a summary of which is provided below:

Councillor Jones asked whether the local Councillor was contacted if someone was having issues, as they might be able to help signpost to the correct department. Julie explained that she didn't but would look to do this in the future and share with her colleagues. One such issue that had arisen was Eastern Europeans being able to vote in the elections.

Councillor Bone asked whether the Hanseatic Union carried out any joined up working with Access. Julie explained that Access had closed so they had taken on extra work because of that.

The Chair added that other charities were also at risk of closure.

Councillor Colwell asked whether they linked up with the Citizens Advice Bureau?

Julie explained that she had spoken to the Regional Manager, but they worked in different ways. The HU was about relationship building and giving advice and guidance also came into that but the HU wanted long-term relationships. In terms of legal advice, she explained that they used Google and Norfolk Community Law, but she was trying to get funding to be able to provide legal advice for their clients, as there was no longer legal aid.

Councillor Colwell asked whether there was anything further that Norfolk Community Law might be able to assist with as well as the Pandora Project.

Julie explained that they did work with the Pandora Project and explained that the difference between the HU and other organisations was that the staff from the HU was culturally aware with the client group and gave examples.

The Assistant Director advised that they were currently carrying out some work with Norfolk Community Law to try and fill some of the gap that Access left. He asked if Members were aware of anywhere that they can operate out of in the town centre as they were looking for a premises that they could use for a couple of days a week.

Julie advised that she had two members of staff trained to immigration level 1 to try fill the gap of Access and they were going to be trained to level 2. They had also been able to employ two of the Access staff on part time contracts and also supported the other Access staff into gaining employment.

Councillor Kemp thanked Julie for the work carried out. She asked whether clients accessed the Healthy Support Vouchers and the Household Support fund.

Julie confirmed that they had accessed the food vouchers and explained how that had helped families as it had been used as an engagement tool.

In terms of the Housing Support Fund, she explained that she was probably the biggest referral to it. She added that isolation was the next target she was working on with a Member of Mark's team, and explained how she was trying to get people to find each other.

She also advised that work was on-going with addiction and mental health. She also provided an update on the work they were doing around SEN.

In response to a query from Councillor Mrs Collop, Julie advised that her team did lots of school admissions and school interventions and advised Councillor Collop to refer them to her team.

Councillor Jones referred to the statistics and asked what percentage came from different wards.

Julie advised they were orientated to the schools and a lot of their clients came from North Lynn, a percentage from South Lynn and a large percentage from the middle of town. She explained that if they found about a new pot of people, they tried to make contact and directed them to services, etc.

The Chair made reference to the Group that had set up a Church and suggested that it might be helpful to introduce them to the Churches Together Group.

The Chair thanked Julie for attending and that the Committee had benefitted from hearing what the Hanseatic Union did.

Julie added that Mark's team worked alongside them and had been very helpful.

8

STREET LIGHTING - TRACY BROOKER

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The Chair welcomed Tracy Brooker, Property Services Manager to the meeting, to respond to questions which had been raised at the Special Expenses meeting held on 16 November 2023, in relation to:

- **Has solar been looked at?**

Tracy confirmed that the Council had looked at using solar power for streetlighting. There were some advantages of using solar streetlighting but also disadvantages, the obvious one being that it was very weather dependant. Also, the initial outlay was greater for solar lighting, it provided limited brightness and there was also an increase in maintenance costs because of the frequency of upkeep and cleaning of the solar panels. Whilst it did have its uses, it was emerging technology, which was being kept under review, but it was not really suitable for the Borough's streetlights at the moment.

- **Have we looked at joining up with county to make savings through procurement?**

This was a function of the County Council, but they had devolved it to the Borough Council and unfortunately, they were not adopting any more streetlights. Some savings had been made. Under the Re:fit programme the Council was awarded £569,000 to change some streetlighting columns which had been procured at a reduction of approximately £270,000. The remaining £300,000 from that budget was going to be used to replace all of the Borough's streetlights with LED equivalents to reduce on-going energy costs. The project was starting now, and it was hoped that it would be out to procurement at the beginning of the next financial year.

- **Lighting in the walks still using incandescent bulbs - what work is being done to replace them?**

These would be replaced to LED lighting as part of the project detailed above.

In summary, the issues raised were on the radar already and it was hoped to bring the changes in as soon as possible subject to going through the appropriate tender processes.

The Chair thanked Tracy for the update and invited the Committee for questions / comments, as detailed below:

Councillor Jones stated that he understood the problems with solar panels, but he felt that there were other technologies where you could have mains supply so that when the battery in the solar panel reduced, it could be switched over to the mains.

The Property Services Manager explained that the solar streetlights had a battery which needed replacing after every 10 years and could be a disadvantage where the streetlights were used more frequently. There were some advantages to solar but not for large scale replacement projects. She added that there were more disadvantages than advantages at the present time for solar lighting, but she envisaged that this would change in time as it was emerging technology.

Councillor Kemp asked if officers were aware that the County Council were sadly planning to cut out 2% of streetlights in Norfolk. She added that there were areas in the town where streetlights were needed for safety reasons and asked if the County had been in contact with the Borough Council. If the Council was trying to encourage walking and cycling more then streetlights were needed in various areas.

The Property Services Manager advised that she was not aware of that but was not surprised. As Members were aware, there was Borough Streetlights and County Streetlights. The Council was planning on replacing the existing bulbs for LED ones, to gain the benefits of reduced maintenance costs and also longevity. There were no plans to

adjust the timings of when the streetlights came on and to leave them as they currently were.

Councillor Kemp stated that some of the areas in South Lynn, Nar Ouse Way, and at the rear of KLIC, which were Borough owned, were not working properly. If people could not walk around safely, they would use other transport modes.

The Property Services Manager undertook to look at the area and see if the streetlights in question was the responsibility of the Borough or Norfolk County Council.

The Chair asked what steps the County Councillors had taken regarding this issue because the Borough had a responsibility to maintain their own streetlights. Residents also needed to report them if there was an issue.

Councillor Colwell stated that residents in Reffley had asked for solar lights to be considered in Reffley Park. The land was owned by the Borough Council and leased to Reffley Community Centre. He would welcome a discussion regarding that.

He also advised that any member of the public could use the on-line form to report an issue or contact their County Councillor. He was also aware that Amey had undertaken a process in recent months to renumber the streetlights by way of yellow stickers and he encouraged residents to use that service if there was a light out.

The Chair added that residents should be empowered to report things themselves. She put on social media the links to be able to report issues and she urged everyone to do that.

She explained that if there were instances of anti-social behaviour taking place then residents should be encouraged to log them and report them on the non-emergency number and when the Police next attended the meeting, they could be passed on to them.

Councillor Mrs Collop added that she often reported issues with streetlighting via Amey and they were usually fixed within 3-5 working days.

The Chair thanked Tracy for the update and attending the meeting.

9

UPDATE ON ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT AT THE WALKS

The Assistant Director – Health, Wellbeing & Public Protection advised the Committee that the bid had been submitted and accepted. A decision on whether the bid had been successful would be announced in March 2024.

The Chair would be speaking to Radio Norfolk about the provision of the accessible play equipment even though a decision on the bid would not have been made. She added that this would send a message to residents that this was an ambition of the Committee.

10 **APPOINT ANOTHER MEMBER TO THE KLACC PLANNING SUB-GROUP**

AGREED: That Councillors Bartrum and Ware be appointed to the Sub-Group, subject to appropriate Planning Committee Training being carried out.

11 **COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET'S FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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The Committee discussed items to be placed on the work programme.

Councillor Colwell asked for an item on a crossing for Tennyson Avenue be added. He advised that he had commissioned a feasibility report on the issue. It was agreed that this would be circulated to the Committee.

Councillor Bone suggested that the Committee should look at producing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town.

AGREED: (1) That the above items be added to the work programme.

(2) That the Committee noted the Cabinet's Forward Decisions list.

12 **HONORARY ALDERMAN JOHN LOVELESS**

Tributes were made to Honorary Alderman John Loveless who had sadly passed away at the weekend.

The Committee then stood for a minutes' silence in his memory.

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

An additional meeting of the Committee had been scheduled for Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 5.15 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 6.22 pm