

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel held on Tuesday, 19th November, 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillors Bearshaw (Chair), Everett (Vice Chair), Beal, Bubb, Collingham, Crofts, Hodson, Lintern, Osborne and Ratcliffe.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor Beales – Leader of the Council

Councillor Ring – Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture

OFFICERS:

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Jemma Curtis – Regeneration Programmes Manager

Phillip Eke – Senior Tourism Officer

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillors Blunt and Colwell, both remotely.

RD55: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blunt and Colwell, however they were both present remotely under Standing Order 34.

RD56: MINUTES

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

RD57: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

RD58: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD59: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillors Blunt and Colwell (remotely).

RD60: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

RD61: CABINET REPORT - ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR WEST NORFOLK

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The Regeneration Programmes Manager presented the report which outlined the development, and recommended the adoption of the Economic Strategy for West Norfolk. It was noted that the Strategy had come to Panel several times in its draft format for the Panel to have input and make comments.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager highlighted the importance of the document for future funding opportunities, investment and devolution deals and how the Strategy set out the ambitions, vision and needs of the area.

The Strategy would inform and support delivery of other organisational Strategies such as the Cultural Strategy.

The Panel were provided with information on the extensive consultation and engagement with Stakeholders to develop the Strategy.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager highlighted the key themes, priorities, strengths and challenges as set out in the Strategy along with the four key sectors. It was noted that the next stage was to look at what investment was needed to maximise growth within the key sector areas and develop an Investment Plan, which would be presented to the Regeneration and Development Panel once prepared.

The Panel was informed that the Strategy had also been endorsed by external partners.

The Assistant Director explained that a lot of time and resource had gone into preparing the Strategy which he felt was sound and objective and delivered a holistic approach.

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

The Chair referred to future expansion plans for RAF Marham.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, Councillor Ring addressed the Panel and thanked officers and Metro Dynamics for preparing the Strategy. He reminded the Panel that this linked with the Norfolk wide Economic Strategy which had previously been endorsed by the Panel. Councillor Ring commented that this document was crucial for investment and to showcase the benefits of the area.

Councillor Collingham asked what the main drivers for change were and that realistic specific actions were required. The Assistant Director explained that drivers for change included the changing use of the town centre, the change in people's shopping habits and the decline in the working age population and the need to retain young people in the area by offering opportunities for them.

Councillor Bubb referred to the change in peoples shopping habits and people doing more online shopping. He commented that ways to entice people to the area needed to be looked at by making the area more attractive to businesses and investors.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, Councillor Ring commented that actions to make West Norfolk an attractive place for people to want to visit, stay and live would be looked at and this Strategy provided the starting point to shape the area, make it a place where businesses wanted to invest in and promote tourism opportunities.

Councillor Beal commented that it would be good to have an initial big project to kick start the Strategy.

Councillor Colwell addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that the vision and objectives were clearly set out.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the West Norfolk Economic Strategy.
2. Endorse the revised King's Lynn Town Board vision and priorities as detailed in section 4.

RD62: **TOURISM ACTION PLAN**

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The Assistant Director provided an overview of the work of the Tourism Informal Working Group and the workshops that they had held, which covered key themes. The Group had developed an action plan which was now being presented to the Panel for consideration.

The Senior Tourism Officer presented the report which provided detail of work carried out by the Tourism Informal Working Group, along with a list of actions for the Panels consideration. He explained that work had started in 2022 with business surveys and development of a Tourism Action Plan, which was then built on by the Tourism Informal Working Group which had identified specific actions against each aim.

The Senior Tourism Officer provided information on the key issues and actions identified by the Group and it was noted that work was ongoing against some of the actions and the plan was regularly updated.

The Senior Tourism Officer offered to provide annual updates to the Panel on the Tourism Action Plan so that the Panel could continue to monitor progress.

The Chair thanked the Senior Tourism Officer for the report, welcomed the opportunity for the Panel to receive annual updates, and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bubb commented that there was a need for more indoor activities and attractions so that people could still visit the area in poor weather and out of season. He stated that work was required to encourage bigger indoor attractions to the area.

Councillor Collingham commented that more children's attractions were needed in King's Lynn, such as soft play. She commended the detailed piece of work which had been produced by the Informal Working Group and stated that the Guildhall would provide many tourism opportunities and promote the area.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that private sector engagement was key to achieving the aims within the action plan.

Councillor Colwell addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and asked if coach and campervan parking was included in the Action Plan and it was confirmed that this would be included in the Car Parking Strategy which was due to be presented to the Panel in the New Year.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, Councillor Ring thanked the Senior Tourism Officer for the work he had put into creating the action plan. He noted that many actions were only ones that the Council could encourage, influence and support as they were outside the remit and capability of the organisation. He noted that the action plan was an agile document and would work in conjunction with other organisational Strategies and Policies. Councillor Ring commented that Tourism was an important asset for the area and needed to be promoted to attract businesses and investors to the area.

RESOLVED:

1. The Tourism Informal Working Group Action Plan was agreed by the Regeneration and Development Panel as a working plan of practical actions and work towards solutions of issues identified in recent times by the local tourism industry.
2. The Tourism Informal Working Group be disbanded as it has now concluded its work.

3. The Panel to receive annual updates on progress.

RD63: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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

RD64: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel was scheduled to take place on 2nd January 2025 at 6.00pm in the Town Hall.

A Joint Panel Meeting had also been arranged for Tuesday 3rd December 2024.

The meeting closed at 6.55 pm