

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK****MEMBER MAJOR PROJECTS BOARD**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Member Major Projects Board held on Monday, 11th November, 2024 at 9.30 am in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Beales (Chair)  
Councillors R Blunt, B Long, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Ring and A Ware

Due to technical difficulties and further to consultation with the Monitoring Officer, the Chair proposed, and the Board agreed to continue with the meeting. The Member Major Projects Board commenced at 10:10am and was not streamed live on YouTube or recorded.

The Board held two minutes silence at 11:00am for Remembrance Day.

1 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

2 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ware declared she was a Board Member for West Norfolk Housing Company and West Norfolk Properties Limited.

4 **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was no urgent business under Standing Order 7.

5 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor de Whalley was present under Standing Order 34.

6 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

7 **STANDING ITEM: ACTION LOG**

The Board had no comments or questions on the Action Log.

## **STANDING ITEM: PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS REPORT INCLUDING THE OVERVIEW REPORT**

The Executive Director presented the Highlight Reports, starting with the overview report. He highlighted to the Board from the overview report that the NORA Enterprise Zone was rated red due to the overspend due to the delays. He outlined there were 7 projects rated amber and 6 rated green. He brought to the Board's attention 3 projects where the ratings had moved to amber.

He explained to the Board the Southgates STARS project had been delayed with Active Travel England assessing the business case on behalf of the Dept for Transport. He added there was a site visit on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 which Active Travel England had provided improvements to the scheme.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley questioned if the phosphor Gypsum removal had impacted the delay.

Councillor Morley commented generally on the capital expenditure across the capital programme, of which approximately one third of forecasted spend had been spent which was significantly lower than expected at the start of the financial year.

Councillor Long commented he felt the Southgates STARS project should have been rated at red.

### **NORA EZ Infrastructure**

The Executive Director introduced the project and highlighted the financial report was red based on Norfolk County Council overspend due to the continued delays in completing the project.

Th Assistant Director of Property and Projects provided further detail to the Board and explained a substantial amount of work had been completed however there were delays relating to Anglian Water signing off the design of the highway works and how they related to the drainage, and other delays with UK Power Networks in respect of electricity supplies. He advised the work north of the development was paused and will resume once negotiations in respect of the overspend had been resolved.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects responded to Councillor de Whalley's earlier question in respect of contamination and explained there were overall contamination issues. Within the Contaminated Land Method Statement there had been agreed ways in which to deal with contamination on site, for example, Phosphor Gypsum previously was allowed to be used as part of the fill material beneath road infrastructure however the Environment Agency had

changed its position on Phosphor Gypsum being used this way and therefore it would need to be deposited at a properly licenced waste site due it being contaminated and classified as Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material. He added further that the NAR Ouse Business Park site to the east of Nar Ouse Way was now clear of Phosphor Gypsum however the site to the west, proposed for the Active Travel Hub still had this contamination present.

#### NORA EZ Development of Spec Units

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects provided an update on the Spec Units project. He highlighted to the Board that the first tenant of the office block would be taking possession soon and occupying the unit in the next week. He outlined the current issue with the surface water attenuation tank on the site and that this needed to be fixed. He explained due to the period of heavy rainfall the attenuation tanks in the car park area had lifted. He advised there would be water table monitoring taking place. The Assistant Director advised that he considered this was an issue to be resolved either by the contractor that had designed and built the speculative units, or the contractor that had designed and built the road and other infrastructure. The Assistant Director further explained that it had been necessary to appoint a specialist firm of consultant engineers to provide advice in respect of this surface water/ground water issue.

Councillor Ring sought clarification on who would be paying for the costs of the engineering consultants and for the water tank to be fixed.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects explained the Borough Council would pay for the consultants and the water table monitoring which would be for the next three months. He added once it had been determined who was responsible out of the contractors then there would be claims for costs including the consultant's costs. He explained to the Board that the contractor that constructed the speculative units was contending that the piling arrangements for the adjacent road had created a dam affect and increased ground water pressure on the tank thereby causing it to be pushed through the car parking surfacing. The highways contractor is contesting this.

The Chair, Councillor Beales sought clarification if the drainage was working on the site.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects explained to the Board that the overall surface water drainage system was working and that the issues with the water tank would not impact the tenant occupying the first unit as there was space to accommodate parking elsewhere on site temporarily. He added that the Council as the Client was caught in the middle of both contractors and eventually, with evidence, we will deem who was at fault.

Councillor Long commented whether the tank was built deep enough and the water on the road was needed to mitigate. He commented further he thought the spec of the tank was the problem.

The Chair, Councillor Beales responded to Councillor Long's comments and explained the issue was more complex.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects brought to the Board's attention that the road design had changed during the course of construction, and this was part of the argument.

The Chair, Councillor Beales asked the Officers to provide regular updates to the Board.

Councillor Long commented the longer the units are not occupied the longer Norfolk County Council would not receive rental income. He referred to the Water Management Alliance building nearby, which was built and occupied quickly.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects explained to the rest of the Board that at the start of this project that a low cost loan had been secured (to build the speculative units) from the then New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership that required the Borough Council to pay the loan back with 50% of the net rents received from the speculative units. The Assistant Director also reminded the Board that the road infrastructure was funded long-term by the Borough Council retaining a greater percentage of the Business Rates generated from the overall site.

The Executive Director commented it was a challenging site and the Borough Council would be working with Norfolk County Council in partnership moving forward.

#### Florence Fields (Parkway)

The Executive Director highlighted to the Board the site was moving forward at pace and issues with the previous groundworks contractor was resolved. He advised the weather had allowed for progress to be made including the last connections. He advised the Board the project had an amber rating due to the financials, the brick layers package had increasing value.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented the new appointed groundworks contractors had been successful with moving the project along and asked that future reports included more about the contractor programme, he also commented that the cash flow needed to be realistic. He added further the site visit was forthcoming and the meeting room on the site was big enough to accommodate Members.

Councillor Morley referred to the money already spent on the project and commented that the transformation needed to be practical and commercial.

The Chair, Councillor Beales asked for the report to contain more detail going forward.

### Salters Road

The Executive Director advised the Board the project was on target and nearing the end of the Project.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented the delivery of properties to Freebridge was a good achievement.

### Southend Road

The Executive Director brought to the Board's attention the project was falling behind the timescales previously set and therefore there had been further extensions to the timescales. He advised the risks of the project were being dealt with and that at the end of October, the handover of the first phase of the properties was understood to be in December 2024.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented one reason delivery had been slow, was because zinc was used for the roofs. He added lessons had been learnt throughout the project however a gateway to Hunstanton had been achieved and the properties looked good.

### West Winch Growth Area

The Executive Director advised the rating of the project was green however the resource part of the project was amber. He added this was due to capacity issues and hoped this was to be resolved later on in the year. He outlined the key aspects of the project to the Board.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley asked whether active travel aspects had been covered at the recent Transport and Infrastructure Steering Group for the West Winch Growth Area Project.

The Executive Director advised he would come back to Councillor de Whalley with the information.

### Southgates Programme Placemaking

The Executive Director introduced the project and outlined that the risks and financial of this project were RAG rated as amber.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place highlighted the road alignment issues and confirmed this had now been achieved.

He added the project included heritage and green space and was designed to improve active travel and connectivity.

The Assistant Director of Property of Projects advised the Board, the Borough Council has purchased additional land surrounding the Southgates and this should be transferred around the end of the month.

The Chair, Councillor Beales advised the Department for Transport had funded the project and embraced the enthusiasm that this project was a regeneration scheme with a transport element.

In response to Councillor Morley, the Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place outlined the business case and commented the project had been delayed but it was moving in the correct direction. He added there was still outstanding funding in which funding from Homes England was being considered. He added further the project was focused on making the Southgates a public realm.

Councillor Morley sought clarification that the project would be delayed until next year.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented due to the new change of government, the Borough Council was still waiting to hear on the levelling up funding.

### STARS

The Executive Director explained this project was linked to the Southgate's place making project. He added this project was highways and therefore led by Norfolk County Council with the Borough Council working closely together with NCC to achieve much wider outcomes.

The Chair, Councillor Beales advised the Board the recent Brownfield funding application was not successful. He raised his concern regarding the traffic disruption and stated Norfolk County Council needed to provide alternative options.

Councillor Long suggested Hardings Way could be opened temporarily to help traffic during the project.

The Chair, Councillor Beales confirmed Norfolk County Council had considered opening Hardings Way as a temporary solution, but that modelling had shown that it didn't alleviate congestion enough for the duration of the works. He stressed to Officers and Members the importance of working with Norfolk County Council to find a mitigation for the traffic.

Councillor Blunt commented that Norfolk County Council should be challenged to find solutions.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley complimented the proposal of active travel routes to minimise traffic and reduce carbon emissions and air quality.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented that any works must be phased with the West Winch Project and that a comprehensive plan for active travel must be created.

Councillor Long added the traffic on Nar Ouse Way needed to be mitigated.

Councillor Morley sought clarification on the cost benefit ratio of the active travel aspects.

Councillor Moriarty highlighted there was no detail included in the report on planning engagement.

The Chair, Councillor Beales agreed with Councillor Moriarty and commented earlier Planning engagement was needed along with Norfolk County Council consultees.

The Executive Director agreed that engagement with Planning should be reflected in the highlight report, although noted that STARS was an NCC scheme.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley expressed his concern on the archaeology of the gates and hoped this was done with diligence.

Councillor Blunt raised concern on Planning resource to provide early engagement and questioned if the Borough Council or Norfolk County Council Planning department was the planning authority. Officers undertook to confirm this.

The Chair, Councillor Beales summarised that earlier Planning engagement needed to be included in the report and confirmed the project was a joint partnership.

### Guildhall

The Executive Director introduced the report to the Board and advised going forward the report would include the monitoring of the cost. He invited the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Placement to provide further detail.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place explained to the Board, additional funding was being looked for to close the funding gap. He added that professional advice was being sought regarding arrangements for the new charity to collect funds.. He explained a report would be going to Cabinet in April rather than February as had previously been indicated.

The Chair, Councillor Beales advised there had been progress with the Charity and the Councillor Ring and himself were meeting with the Director General of the National Trust.

Councillor Ring commented the main objective was to explain the project and wider benefits in more detail along with the importance and impact both for a building with such significance and the wider town.

Councillor Morley referred to the Budget meeting being held on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and explained the importance of the meeting for the forecast expenditure for the project for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027.

Councillor Moriarty requested at the next Member Major Project Meeting an exempt session was to be held to discuss the Guildhall and CIO in further detail.

The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place explained to the Board the Section 151 Officer had been spoken to regarding the flexible approach to the budget for the project as the cost of the project was not able to be forecasted at the time of budget setting in early February.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley sought clarification that the funding gap was not to increase.

The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place provided clarification that the funding gap was overestimated and provided contingencies throughout the project.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented the front of the site had little street presence, he also commented on the complexity of the project.

#### Active & Clean Connectivity

The Executive Director introduced the project and advised with recent recruitment there was now sufficient resource available. He added this project had its challenges especially with reference to the site contamination mentioned earlier.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place explained to the Board, this project was a big challenge and the Tennyson Road Scheme had been proposed to be removed from the Town Deal programme due to issues with Network Rail.

The Chair, Councillor Beales agreed this was the correct decision as MP James Wild and the Town Deal Board had been in communications with National Rail. He added this was not deliverable.

Councillor Morley commented whether there could be a separate programme to remove the Tennyson Road crossing.



The Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place advised other aspects of the ACC programme would still be required to be carried out based on the agreement between the Town Deal Board and the Government, and that an alternative funding route would be considered under a programme with favourable timeline for delivery.

The Chair, Councillor Beales confirmed the funding could be reallocated to deliver outcomes.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley highlighted Tennyson Road was a priority and was continuously brought up due to the community interest and therefore should be kept as a Town Deal Board priority.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented further the funding needed to be reallocated to the outstanding projects on the Town Deal Board list. He added it was not as simple as choosing another project due to the timescales involved in the programme.

The Programme Management Office Manager confirmed a project adjustment request would be produced early in 2025 for this project which would outline all changes.

#### Riverfront Regeneration Project

The Chair, Councillor Beales asked the Board to ask any questions they had regarding this project during the presentation which was a separate item on the agenda and the exempt session.

#### Rail to River

The Project Officer introduced the report and highlighted the high level of interest which had been received for the Pop-Up units. She explained to the Board, the drainage issues had not been resolved but there was a contractor in place. She added there was a delay in the Street Arch due to scaffolding around Boots. She outlined to the Board there was now movement on the planting scheme as an alternate solution had been agreed for trees to be planted in planters.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place thanked Officers for persevering through the challenges of the project and advised timescales had been underestimated.

The Chair, Councillor Beales echoed the appreciation of Officers continuous work on the project and referred to the importance of early planning engagement.

Councillor Moriarty commented on the update on the project from the Project Officer and sought clarification on the timescales of the scaffolding at Boots.

The Project Officer confirmed the scaffolding should be removed from Boots in the next 3 weeks.

Councillor Morley sought clarification if the trees in the planters were a requirement.

The Chair, Councillor Beales confirmed the trees were an important part of the project to provide greenery in the Town Centre.

Councillor Ring sought clarification if there was going to be a tenant in the Pop-Up units in the next 4 weeks.

The Project Officer agreed to provide the Board with an update in relation to the units being occupied. It was noted that this aspect was dealt with by the Operations and Commercial team.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley asked if Officers had considered the correct trees for the planters.

The Chair, Councillor Beales confirmed factors had been debated and birch trees would be planted in the planters.

#### Multi-User Community Hub

The Executive Director highlighted that the Airwaves mast had now been relocated which was previously a stumbling block in the project and progress was now being made. He provided reassurance that the risks and timescales were being actively managed.

Councillor Ring referred to the pictures in the report and thanked Officers for providing the evidence of the removal of the mast.

The Chair, Councillor Beales highlighted to the Board that the King's Lynn Town Board had been able to visit the site a few weeks ago and confirmed that the view of the Majestic Cinema had improved following changes to the footprint of the MUCH building.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing and Place outlined to the Board the key risk currently identified around supply chain difficulties.

Councillor Long sought clarification on what the mast was used for.

The Chair, Councillor Beales confirmed the mast was relocated to Broad Street and was used for Telecommunications.

#### Lynnsport One

The Executive Director provided an update on the project to the Board in which the groundwork was moving forward, and the project was tentatively ahead of timescale.

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**UPDATE ON PMO**

The Programme Management Office Manager provided an update to the Board and explained the recruitment of two posts was underway. She advised a large number of applications had been received and interviews were planned for November with the aim for Officers to start in early 2025.

The Chair, Councillor Beales asked if there was any movement with a new software being implemented.

The Programme Management Office Manager confirmed work was still being carried out, that engagement with procurement had taken place, and that work to identify the correct specification of software was ongoing.

Councillor Long commented it was positive to see 2 vacant posts were being utilised for the PMO roles.

The Executive Director highlighted the importance of the software and explained with limited resource the software would reduce resource pressure.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley asked if the software could be integrated with other areas within the Borough Council

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**RIVERFRONT REGENERATION- ENGAGEMENT WITH PLANNING AND CONSERVATION**

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects introduced the report to the Board and explained the original ideas for the project, and, as set out in the report, outlined that as the project evolved there was consultation with planning and conservation, as well as other teams within the council.

Councillor Moriarty thanked the Assistant Director of Property and Projects for the report and encouraged consultation with the Conservation Officer and Planning. He commented about the difference in how the Planning and Regeneration departments worked.

Councillor Morley questioned the use of consultants and highlighted that he felt a high number had been used on this project. He questioned if value for money was being considered. He referred to the highlight report on the project and queried the number of FTE Jobs created.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented the use of consultants was useful however recognised that the council must ensure the consultants work to our requirements. He added the use of consultants

was to provide expertise in specific areas and also different ideas and options to consider.

The Assistant Director Property and Projects explained to the Board, the project was challenging, and that the initial concept designs had changed over time with multiple consultations with the relevant statutory bodies, including Historic England, and also following various Panel and Board meetings, as well as various public consultations.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects referred to Councillor Morley's comment regarding the use of consultants and advised there was not the skills in house which were required therefore use of consultants was needed.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented consultees do not dictate what can be done but can provide a pragmatic approach and options for ways the project can be delivered.

Councillor Ware sought clarification on why the report did not mention engagement with the Landlord for the Custom House.

The Chair, Councillor Beales advised the lease on the Custom House needed to be extended.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects confirmed he was in communication with the Landlord on extending the lease and provided reassurance that the Landlord was consulted and engaged with throughout. He confirmed to the Board he would provide an update on the progress.

Councillor Moriarty commented the consultants needed to know King's Lynn and to ensure we provide a brief to them to provide a practical and reasonable end result. The Assistant Director advised that the Architect led Design Team had previous significant involvement, and knowledge, of King's Lynn with their being involved in the development of the town-wide landscaping strategy which involved significant research relating to the town's historical past and its evolution.

The Chair, Councillor Beales advised the Board the Custom House was a listed building therefore there were restrictions and parameters.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley asked for sustainable and functional aspects to be included in the business plan, which the Assistant Director Property & Projects had confirmed was about to be reviewed.

Councillor Morley echoed Councillor Moriarty's comments about the consultants needing to know the local area.

The Executive Director advised contract management was required to highlight what could and couldn't be done. He added that the

specification for any outsourced work needed to be applicable and outline what could be expected.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects recognised a lesson had been learnt that earlier engagement with Planning and the Conservation Officer was required. However it was noted that the Conservation Officer post was vacant for a significant period of time during the early stages of this project.

Councillor Ring agreed that the correct team including the Cultural Officer was needed for the Custom House and Riverfront. He added what needed to be identified was what was wanted to be delivered and the main focus was for the Custom House to be open to the public.

Councillor Ware commented that Members of that Ward needed to be included in the consultations and highlighted that the Councillor Ward Forums were not specifically covered in the report.

The Assistant Director of Property and Projects confirmed that Ward Councillors had been part of the engagement process undertaken including one to one briefings.

Councillor Long highlighted residents had been engaged with and the Councillor Ward Forum was part of the consultation.

Councillor Morley raised concerns over the construction element and timeline of the project.

11                    **STANDING ITEM: OFFICER MAJOR PROJECTS BOARD MINUTES (FOR INFORMATION)**

The Board noted the Officer Major Project Board Minutes.

12                    **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board noted the Work Programme for 2024/25

13                    **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 9:30am in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The Democratic Service Officer was going to liaise with Officer and the Chair and Vice- Chair to move the date of the next meeting forward before the Budget meeting.

14 **FOCUSED PROJECT PRESENTATION- RIVERFRONT**

The Project Officer gave a presentation on the Riverfront Regeneration project which covered the Custom House, Dry side facilities and Devil's alley. She provided a summary of the project objectives, scope, outputs and outcomes and how the project had developed to date, as this was the end of RIBA stage 3. She added that the Project Sponsor had recently changed and was now the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place.

The Project Officer highlighted the existing layout of the Custom House and outlined the pre-application work along with the preferred option for planning application. She outlined to the Board that the current business plan was no longer applicable due to restrictions on how many people can be in the building if we no longer creating additional exits.

The Project Officer provided a general update on the dry side facilities and on Devil's Alley. The presentation showed Board members aerial plans of Devil's alley along with proposed designs.

The Project Officer advised of two incorrect dates included in the presentation and provided the revised dates in 2025.

15 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

16 **SOUTHEND ROAD**

The Chair, Councillor Beales provided a further update to the Board.

The Board asked questions and the Chair and Officer responded.

17 **FOCUSED PROJECT PRESENTATION- RIVERFRONT**

The Project Officer presented the presentation to the Board.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Board.

The Board members asked questions and Officers responded.

**The meeting closed at 12.55 pm**