

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 7th July, 2025 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor A Beales (Chair), P Bland, M de Whalley, S Lintern, J Moriarty, S Ring (Vice-Chair), J Rust and S Squire

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Kate Blakemore – Chief Executive

Alexa Baker – Monitoring Officer

Carl Holland – Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director for Housing, Place and Regeneration

Jemma Curtis – Regeneration Programmes Manager

Robin Lewis – Project Officer

Tim Fitzhigham – Cultural Officer

Jason Birch - Assistant Director for Property and Projects

CAB16 APOLOGIES

An apology of absence was received from Councillor Morley.

CAB17 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

CAB18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CAB19 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was no chair's correspondence.

CAB20 MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor T Parish attended under Standing Order 34.

CAB21 CALLED IN MATTERS

There were no matters called in.

CAB22 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES

The Regeneration and Development Panel at its meeting on the 1st July 2025 made comments and recommendations on the Guildhall and Creative Hub Report which were taken into account by Cabinet during consideration of the item.

CAB23 **GUILDHALL AND CREATIVE HUB**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Vice-Chair and Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ring introduced the report.

The Assistant Director for Housing, Place and Regeneration provided Cabinet Members with history of the project.

The Chair invited Councillor Parish to address the Cabinet under Standing Order 34. Councillor Parish explained to Cabinet Members this was debated and questioned at the Regeneration and Development Panel. He highlighted the concerns of the Panel which included fundraising and footfall.

Councillor Parish highlighted that the Panel supported the recommendations and an additional recommendation was put forward to ensure the Regeneration and Development Panel were provided with updates and progress on the Project.

The Project Officer highlighted that in relation to footfall, the business plan, specifically 5.3 onwards provided detail of the level of scrutiny in the type of market, attractions and relevant comparison resulting in confidence in the figures being realistic.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Ring highlighted the importance of marketing which was key to ensure success of the project.

The Assistant Director for Housing, Place and Regeneration explained the funding strategy would be pursued for the next two years: government grants, agencies and charitable organisations to invest and support the project. He provided assurance there was a clear plan of work to pursue additional funding sources

Councillor de Whalley provided information on other leading visitor attractions for 2024 as a comparison, including attractions in Norfolk to provide further context that if marketed well the figures were realistic.

The Chair, Councillor Beales sought clarification on what £3.7 million covered in relation to the 'reinstate and re open' option and it was clarified that this was the total amount for renovating the theatre and other buildings, the restaurant and other areas were not included.. He confirmed this figure did not include any disabled access. The Cultural

Officer confirmed £2.6 million was spent to develop and investigate the project to date.

The Project Officer added further this figures was provisional due to uncertainty until building control were consulted. He advised there was a risk £3.7 million could be too minimal for the works.

Councillor Squire commented that this project was special and unique and would be successful. She added she hoped this would engage West Norfolk students studying Shakespeare.

Councillor Lintern questioned if there was enough space in King's Lynn for coach parking and hotels. She sought clarification the Car Parking Strategy would be developed in line with the project.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager advised when the project was providing certainty and confidence to the private sector there would be attraction in investment in King's Lynn. She provided assurance the Car Parking Strategy was to be presented to Members later in the year.

Councillor Rust expressed her confidence in the project from the level of information given by Officers. Councillor Beales echoed the comments on the level and detail of briefing from Officers on the project throughout.

The Chair, Councillor Beales sought clarification and reassurance on affordability and risk mitigation.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Ring explained funding opportunities included grants and funding within the Council by capital assets. He added there may be an element of borrowing.

Councillor Moriarty agreed with the recommendation from Regeneration and Development Panel and asked they be provided with clear timescales.

The Chair, Councillor Beales expressed his thanks to Officers and Councillor Ring as Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet Members expressed thanks to all Officers for their hard work on this project so far and indicated their support for the recommendations.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Ring summed up by thanking Officers for all their hard work and commented the journey would continue after full Council on the 17th July. He highlighted the benefit the project would have on the community.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet resolves, subject to approval of recommendation 6 below:

0. The Regeneration and Development Panel are kept up to date on progress and receive regular updates on the project.
1. To proceed with the St George's Guildhall & Creative Hub ("the Major Scheme") based on the RIBA Stage 4 design.
2. The total spend of up to £30.5m to deliver the Major Scheme is authorised, to be financed in accordance with the Finance Strategy at Appendix 6 (Exempt), which includes up to £16.0m of borrowing in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
3. The award of the contract to deliver the Major Scheme ("the Main Contract") to 'Bidder A' is approved.
4. Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business to approve material changes to the scope of the Major Scheme and/or variations to the Main Contract that are within the approved budget and in accordance with the Local Assurance Framework for this project.
5. Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to apply for and accept external funding, whether via grants or donations, for the Major Scheme, which, when received, shall be applied towards the Major Scheme and to reduce capital borrowing where outstanding.

Recommendations to Full Council:

6. To amend the Capital Programme for the Major Scheme up to £30.5m and to amend the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in accordance with the Finance Strategy at Appendix 6 (Exempt)

Reason for Decision:

To deliver the transformational St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub Major Scheme, supporting the Council's commitment to heritage, culture, and economic growth. The Major Scheme aims to help grow local businesses, revitalise the town centre, and enhance the leisure offer in the historic heart of King's Lynn, in line with:

- West Norfolk Economic Strategy (2024),
- Cultural & Heritage Strategy (2025),
- Corporate Strategy (2023), and
- Town Investment Plan (2021).

The Major Scheme will meet the agreed outputs and outcomes of the Towns Fund Programme, as endorsed by the King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board (formerly the Town Board) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Major Scheme will deliver a long-term, sustainable operation to this nationally significant cultural heritage site in addition to addressing the long-term costs liability that the site already represents to the Council. According to the updated Business Plan and Economic Impact Assessment, the Major Scheme is expected to generate circa £30.8 million in economic benefit and create 117 jobs over the initial 15 years period and following this payback period, the Major Scheme will continue to

generate income and attract interest and visitors, for many decades to come.

CAB24 EXCLUSION OF THE 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 item of business 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.

CAB25 EXEMPT - GUILDHALL AND CREATIVE HUB

Cabinet did not consider this item in exempt session.

CAB26 EXEMPT - SALE OF INDUSTRIAL LAND

The Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel had given agreement that this decision could be considered without being advertised on the Forward Decision List for the full 28 days.

The Vice- Chair, Councillor Ring and the Assistant Director for Property and Projects presented the report to Cabinet and responded to questions and comments from Cabinet Members

The Monitoring Officer responded to questions on the report from a legal aspect.

RESOLVED:

- 1 To sell the land identified in the report for £575,000 plus VAT.
- 2 To delegate authority to the Assistant Director Property and Projects to finalise all terms of the proposed disposal.
- 3 To authorise Legal Services Manager to complete all necessary sale documentation in respect of the site.

Reason for Decision

The site was recognised as surplus following an asset review in 2007, and the capital receipt will support the Council's budget. Officers have validated through independent valuation that the sale price meets best consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.14 pm