BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Wednesday, 2nd September, 2026 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors R Blunt (Chair), S Bearshaw, J Bhondi, P Bland, A Dickinson, B Jones, B Long (Vice - Chair), A Moore (Substitute) and S Nash

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34a: Councillor A Ryves

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:
Councillor A Beales, Leader of the Council
Councillor C Morley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor J Ratcliffe, Portfolio Holder for Transport Strategy and Car Parking

OFFICERS PRESENT:
Debbie Ess, Senior Corporate Governance Officer
Honor Howell, Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Leader
Carl Holland, Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Siobhan Cleeve, Interim Assistant Director of Leisure and Culture
Duncan Hall, Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place
Emma Hodds, Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer
Michelle Drewery, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Stuart Ashworth, Assistant Director for Environment and Planning
Mark Whitmore, Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection

CP32 **APOLOGIES**

An apology of absence was received from Councillor Kirk.

CP33 **MINUTES**

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

CP34 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

CP35 **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

CP36 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Ryves was present under Standing Order 34a.

CP37 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was none.

CP38 **CALL INS (IF ANY)**

There were no call-ins to consider.

CP39 **SIGNING OF THE SCRUTINY AND AUDIT RELATIONSHIP PROTOCOL**

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The Democratic Services Officer explained that the protocol was similar to the Executive and Scrutiny Relationship Protocol and set out the functions, responsibilities and differences between the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Panels.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryves under Standing Order 34a, the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that potential referrals to Audit Committee should be raised with Democratic Services for discussion between the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the relevant Scrutiny Panels and Audit Committee, together with officers, to determine the most suitable remit.

RESOLVED: The Chair signed the Scrutiny and Audit Relationship Protocol

CP40 **CABINET REPORT - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - BUSINESS PLAN**

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The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place presented the proposed 2027–2032 Discover King's Lynn Business Plan. He explained that King's Lynn had had a Business Improvement District since 2017 and that the renewal ballot was the third ballot for continuation. The Council had a statutory role in running the ballot and was itself a levy-paying constituent organisation. The proposed plan was intended to support business prosperity, the Council's economic strategy, thriving town centres and local economic growth.

In response to the Vice-Chair, Councillor Long, the BID Manager explained that every eligible business premises within the BID boundary had a vote. Approval required a majority both by number of votes cast and by the rateable value represented by votes in favour. The Council had a significant block of votes because it occupied multiple hereditaments, but the BID Manager commented that they were cautiously confident that sufficient business support existed beyond the Council vote.

The Chair, Councillor Blunt questioned how much conversation there had been with small businesses. The BID Manager described the BID's support for smaller traders, including informal advice, signposting to Council contacts, business networking and day-to-day assistance. Members also discussed wardens, street marshals, radio communication between retailers and the night-time economy, events and measures supporting safety and security.

The BID Manager responded to a question from Councillor Ryves under Standing Order 34a and explained a larger budget could support additional staff, more public-realm improvements, planters, street art, larger or more frequent events, open-air or drive-in films and reduced reliance on borrowed premises and equipment. The current budget was approximately £200,000.

The Chair, Councillor Blunt asked if the King's Lynn BID worked with other BIDs in the area. The BID Manager explained the BID also worked with Norwich, Great Yarmouth and a regional East of England network to share information and good practice.

In response to further questions from Councillor Ryves, under Standing Order 34a, the BID Manager referred to a previous parking promotion involving free or reduced-price parking which cost approximately £10,000 but did not produce a proportionate increase in footfall or usage. She advised that any future parking promotion would need to run for a sustained period, be well marketed and have baseline and outcome measures. She explained events in King's Lynn were funded variously by the Council, the BID or Vancouver Quarter.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet resolves to:

a) Endorse the Discover King's Lynn BID Business Plan 2027-2032.

b) Endorse the holding of a BID renewal ballot in accordance with the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

c) Support the Borough Council to vote in favour of the BID renewal for all eligible properties within the BID area for which the Council is liable for the payment of the BID levy.

d) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to undertake all actions necessary to facilitate the BID renewal process.

e) Continue to work collaboratively with Discover King's Lynn to support the successful delivery of the BID Business Plan and wider town centre regeneration objectives.

CP41 **CABINET REPORT - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1**

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The Senior Corporate Governance Officer reported that 83% of current projects were progressing well and on track, with the remaining 17% subject to minor issues or delays being actively monitored. She also reported that 84% of key performance indicators met or exceeded their targets, while 16% did not. The climate change strategy and action plan and the five-year leisure and culture strategy were completed in quarter one. A new KPI measuring affordable homes delivered in the borough was added for 2026–27. The reported figure for 2025–26 was 217 properties; with quarter two data being gathered for presentation to the panel in November.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members. The Vice – Chair, Councillor Long questioned whether the red status for the average Customer Information Centre answering time was genuinely caused by annual billing volumes and resource pressures, since those factors recur each year, and asked whether homeworking technology might be contributing.

The Senior Corporate Governance Officer Officers explained that the target had changed from 90 seconds to two minutes and that the Nova system now handled simpler queries, leaving the Customer Information Centre with more complex calls. They proposed monitoring performance by individual quarter rather than cumulatively so that a poor first quarter would not continue to affect the annual position.

The Chair, Councillor Blunt challenged the amber status of the car parking strategy because its target date had passed in December 2025. The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place explained that delays to the wider master plan had delayed the strategy, but both the car parking strategy and master plans for the relevant towns were expected to come forward in autumn. The Leader, Councillor Beales added further the status was amber due to the progress and development of the progress.

It was proposed by the Chair, Councillor Blunt, seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Long, and agreed by the Panel that the status of the Car Parking Strategy be amended from Amber to Red.

The Vice – Chair, Councillor Long questioned why the Southgates Masterplan remained amber when basic improvement works such as weed and fly-posting removal were already expected. The Leader, Councillor Beales, explained that minor works were ongoing but that negotiations with First Bus over leases had taken longer than anticipated. The Panel was offered a future update through the relevant work programme, with a recommendation that the matter be included on the next Regeneration and Development Panel's agenda.

Under Standing Order 34a, Councillor Ryves questioned whether reporting approximately 80% performance should be viewed negatively because targets are intended to be challenging. The Leader, Councillor Beales commented the figures represented an honest accountability mechanism rather than soft budgeting, while members noted that targets should be realistic but sufficiently challenging.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet and made the following additional recommendation:

That the Panel recommend to Cabinet that the status of the Car Parking Strategy be amended from Amber to Red, in light of the delay against the target date and the Panel's concerns regarding progress.

Cabinet resolves to:

To review the Performance Management Report and comment on the delivery against the Corporate Strategy.

CP42 CABINET REPORT - BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 1

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The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer presented the revenue, capital, treasury and arrears position for the period ending 30 June 2026. He reported no overall movement against the forecast contribution of £1.189 million to the General Fund reserve, which was expected to produce an end-year reserve balance of approximately £11 million.

In response to a question from the Vice – Chair, Councillor Long on the forecast variable being nil, the Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained favourable effects from summer weather, including potentially higher car-parking income and reduced fuel use from fewer grass cuts, were expected to feature more prominently in quarter two. These favourable effects were being offset by pressures including pay awards, property maintenance, leisure facilities and public events.

The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained the Council had budgeted for £300,000 of Internal Drainage Board compensatory grant but received confirmation of £537,000, an additional £237,000 for the year. Members noted that the settlement remained uncertain and one-year in nature. The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer explained the Drainage Board funding review by Defra had produced a draft report for consultation, while the special interest group continued lobbying and preparing responses to HM Treasury and ministerial consultations for a more consistent long-term funding arrangement.

The Vice – Chair, Councillor Long questioned why the Council was supporting a fire and rescue facility when fire services were Norfolk County Council responsibility. Councillor Morley, Portfolio Holder for Finance explained the project had been brought to their attention by Councillor de Winton the Fire Champion and the need for training facilities at the South Lynn Fire Station.

The Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Leader explained that the project responded to increased development and service pressure in South Lynn and West Winch and was being delivered with Norfolk County Council. £300,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funding had been secured and matched by the County, creating a £600,000 project. Site clearance and ground surveys were planned after bird-nesting restrictions. In response to a question from the Vice – Chair, Councillor Long, the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer explained the original £30,000 provision was being funded by the Fire Service and was for feasibility. Following further developments with the scheme and securing CIL project funding, it was expected that the project could be removed from the Council's capital programme because there was now no requirement for the Council to contribute directly to the project.

The Leader, Councillor Beales highlighted this was the right thing for the Community given the pressure and impact on the Fire Service was to experience following Local Government Reorganisation.

In response to Councillor Ryes, under Standing Order 34a, the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer referred Members to the appendix of the report as it provided a breakdown of services areas. She explained that projects move between capital programme tiers through business cases and established governance processes.

Under Standing Order 34a, Councillor Ryves questioned the apparent gap between loans and investments and whether Towns Fund receipts were included. The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer explained that borrowing was used to manage cash flow and that most Towns Fund money had been received, with unspent balances included in the overall position. They cautioned that the apparent net deficit should not be treated as the Council's long-term debt because it also reflected timing, capital receipts, investments and cash-flow movements. The figures were to be recast in future reports to make the Treasury position clearer.

The Panel supported the Cabinet recommendation, with Councillor Nash abstaining from the vote.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet resolves to:

1) Note the forecast outturn for Revenue and Capital monitoring position as at 30th June 2026 for 2026/2027.
2) Agree to update the Capital Programme as set out in section 3 of the report.

CP43 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME, SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS**

RESOLVED: The Panel Work Programme, Cabinet Forward Decision List and the Shareholder Committee Work Programme was noted.

CP44 **CABINET REPORT – FUTURE SWIMMING PROVISION FOR WEST NORFOLK**

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The Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Leader presented the report and the preferred option for replacing St James Swimming Pool with a standalone facility beside Lynnsport, and the panel supported allocating £845,609.17 for RIBA stages two and three, subject to a future full business case and final go/no-go decision.

St James Swimming Pool was approximately 50 years old, increasingly expensive to maintain and approaching the end of its economic life, although it remained operational and subject to safety monitoring. Previous options to integrate a pool into Lynnsport were found to involve significant affordability, construction and disruption risks. The preferred option was a standalone pool adjacent to Lynnsport on the model railway site. The proposed facility would include an eight-lane 25-metre main pool, a four-lane 17-metre learner pool with a movable floor, a splash pad, sauna, steam facilities and spectator seating. The design would increase the main pool from six to eight lanes, provide greater capacity for lessons, clubs and competitions.

Councillor Moore requested a breakdown of the development allocation, the certainty it would provide, the robustness of the £22.93 million estimate, contingencies, borrowing, revenue effects, whole-life costs and the value of the work under local government reorganisation.

The Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Leader explained the detailed breakdown and some contingency information were exempt, while the RIBA process was intended to establish the information needed for the final business case and go/no-go decision. Any decision would remain subject to consideration of the future unitary arrangements and consultation with successor councils and Section 151 Officers. The Interim Assistant Director of Leisure and Culture commented St James was subject to six-monthly inspections by civil and structural engineers, particularly because of problems in the undercroft. The building remained safe to operate, but its deterioration rate could not be predicted precisely.

The Vice – Chair, Councillor Long asked for assurance on the cost of the project. Officers explained the requested £845,609.17 would fund progression through RIBA stages two and three, including design development, technical investigations, surveys, planning and cost planning. It was included within an estimated total project cost of approximately £22.93 million but does not approve construction at this stage.

The Leader, Councillor Beales, provided assurance that the projected development costs were proportionate to the overall project cost. He referred to Local Government Reorganisation and the need to maintain business as usual, including the safe operation of St James' Swimming Pool. He also emphasised the importance of keeping the shadow authority and future unitary authority fully informed as the project progressed.

Councillor Bhondi sought clarification how much grant funding was available for the proposed swimming pool. The Interim Assistant Director of Leisure and Culture commented potential funding routes included Sport England capital funding, place-expansion funding through Active Norfolk, devolution funding and health and wellbeing or preventative-care initiatives. Sport England would require the scheme to reach at least RIBA stage three, so no firm grant figure was available at this time but will be pursued after RIBA Stage 3 if the proposal is approved by Cabinet and Council. In response to a question from Councillor Nash, the Interim Assistant Director of Leisure and Culture added a standalone Sport England contribution might be up to approximately 10% in suitable circumstances, subject to national and local priorities, with other grants likely to be smaller or targeted at enhancing the facility.

Councillor Nash questioned further if other locations such as Nar Ouse Way or West Winch had been considered. The Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Leader with further comments from Councillor Beales explained Lynnsport provided accessibility, existing infrastructure, shared staffing and operational synergies. Nar Ouse Way would involve significant challenges, including contaminated land and remediation requirements, access and new car-parking infrastructure. The requested development funding was specifically for the Lynnsport option and would not assess alternative sites.

Under Standing Order 34a, Councillor Ryves highlighted the risk of the new unitary following Local Government Reorganisation could decide to not proceed with the project. The Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer highlighted this was included on the Corporate Risk register under Local Government Reorganisation previously presented to Audit Committee.

CP45 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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When voting for the exclusion of press and public, Councillor Nash voted against the exclusion for the reason, paragraph 9 of Part 2, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 takes precedence over paragraph 3.

The Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer advised the Panel that paragraph 9 of Schedule 12A would apply at the planning application stage, should the development progress, when the full application would be considered in public. However, as the report before the Panel preceded any planning decision and the exempt information related to financial matters concerning the development of the site and the business affairs of a company, the Panel was advised that the exemption applied for consideration of the report at the Corporate Performance Panel.

The Panel supported the Cabinet recommendation, with Councillor Nash abstaining from the vote.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 7:04pm and reconvened at 7:10pm.

CP46 **EXEMPT - CABINET REPORT - FUTURE SWIMMING PROVISION FOR WEST NORFOLK**

During the exempt session, the Panel considered commercially sensitive information relating to third parties, together with detailed financial information. These included matters concerning the model railway, income assumptions and the estimated cost of works required to support a ten-year life plan for St James' Swimming Pool.

After the exempt discussion, the meeting returned to public session at 7:28pm for the recommendation.

The Panel supported the Cabinet recommendation, with Councillor Nash abstaining from the vote.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet resolves to:

1. Recommend to Council to approve the allocation of **£845,609.17** to progress the project to build a standalone 8x25m swimming pool with learner pool and splash pad to RIBA Stages 2 and 3.

2. Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive and Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Business to enter into an Access Agreement Leisure to progress the project to RIBA Stage 3.

3. Note that a future report will return with the full business case in March 2027 for a final decision on whether to proceed with the project.

CP47 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel was scheduled to take place on 6th October 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.29 pm