

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, 15th January, 2018 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillor A Tyler (Chairman)
Councillors J Collop, Mrs S Collop, G Howman, C Joyce, T Smith and
Mrs M Wilkinson

Officers: Stuart Ashworth - Assistant Director
Lorraine Gore - Executive Director (Finance)
Chris Bamfield - Executive Director
Mark Fuller - Principal Project Surveyor
Jemma Curtis - Regeneration Programmes Manager

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss Bambridge, G Middleton, P Rochford and T Wing-Pentelow, A Beales - Portfolio Holder, Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder and B Long – Leader.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared.

4 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

5 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

6 CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

There was no Chairman's correspondence.

The Chairman did take the opportunity to introduce Inspector Mark Askham to the meeting.

Inspector Askham explained that he had taken over from Inspector Hornigold, and was looking forward to presenting his formal report to the Committee in March.

7 **UPDATE FROM FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING**

The Chairman introduced Alex Dixon, Director of Assets and Development from Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) to the Committee.

Mr Dixon explained that he had currently been in the post for 6 months having previously worked in the West Midlands.

He gave an update to the Committee on:

- The redevelopment of the Blockbuster site
- Phase 4, 5, 6 and 7 works at Hillington Square
- Café at Hillington Square
- Bidding for Section 106 properties
- Other development sites at Great Massingham and West Winch.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dixon for his update and invited questions/comments from the Panel.

In relation to issues regarding funding arrangements, the Chairman referred to a presentation given to the Committee from Tony Hall, some time ago, where he referred to potential problems with future funding. Mr Dixon agreed to investigate this with Mr Hall, as FCH had developed a five year plan and there had been no issues with funding.

Councillor Mrs Collop asked whether there was any way to make it easier for pedestrians walking past the Blockbuster site.

Mr Dixon agreed with the comment made from Councillor Mrs Collop and explained that he had asked the contractor if they could pull the hoardings back. However, the contractors had advised that as part of the health and safety plan they were not able to move the hoardings until such time as a wall had been constructed. The contractors were working to an approved plan for the site.

In response to a query from Councillor J Collop, Mr Dixon explained that FCH were mainly purchasing 2-3 bed houses from developers through Section 106 agreements. The developers had already discussed with Council Officers the demand for that area but mainly it was 2-3 bedroom houses.

In relation to the delay in the Universal Credit and the affect this would have for FCH, Mr Dixon explained that the effects would be the same as for the rest of the country, for example a gap in between time applying and receiving the credit. This could also have implications for rent arrears.

Mr Dixon explained that the café at Hillington Square was run by FCH and was self-sufficient and very well used.

Councillor Howman referred to garage vacancies and asked if any analysis had been carried out in relation to empty garages. He added that if it turned out that the garages were impossible to let, could the area be regenerated.

Mr Dixon explained that a lot of analysis had been carried out which indicated that it was the size of the garages which meant that a lot of them were empty and sometimes used for storage. He explained that people liked to park on the curtilage. He provided the Committee with the options that FCH were looking at.

With regards to one of the options of demolishing the garages and creating open parking area, Councillor Mrs Wilkinson expressed concern in relation to this and explained that in some cases the garages created privacy and security for some residents.

Mr Dixon advised that FCH would consult with their customers as to what they wanted. He assured Councillor Wilkinson that if they did take down a garage they would replace the rear boundary.

Mr Dixon explained to the Committee the bidding process for Section 106 properties. With regards to Public Finance Borrowing Requirements, he would refer that to the FCH's Finance Director to respond.

In response to a query from the Chairman in relation to what were the greatest challenges for FCH going forward, Mr Dixon explained that this related to the availability of land for construction at a reasonable price and size. He explained that coming from the West Midlands he had noticed an increase in construction costs and felt that this was linked to the availability of labour.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dixon for attending the meeting.

8

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.

9 **EXEMPT - KING'S LYNN WATERFRONT**

Jemma Curtis the Regeneration Programmes Manager gave an update to the Committee on the waterfront in King's Lynn and the progress which had been made. She reminded the Committee that a Master Plan for the riverfront area had been developed and agreed last year.

There were no questions from the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Jemma for attending the meeting.

10 **EXEMPT - KING'S LYNN ARTS CENTRE**

The Executive Director advised the Committee that a report had been presented to the Regeneration & Development Panel regarding options for St Georges Guildhall complex and the implications for Capital Funding (a copy of the report to the R&D Panel had been sent to the Committee). The Panel had been asked to consider the options for the complex and provide a steer for Cabinet on the preferred way forward.

The Committee were provided with information on the following:

- Previous work which had been carried out;
- How the Guildhall complex had been run in the past.
- The reasons why the previous bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund had been unsuccessful;
- Work which had been carried out with other organisations; and
- Future funding opportunities.

The Executive Director advised the Committee that the R&D Panel had agreed to set up an Informal Working Group to look at the issues with the complex in more detail. The Working Group did contain two members from the Committee – Councillor Tyler and Councillor Middleton.

The Principal Project Surveyor presented the Panel with information on the current issues with the site and potential ideas for the future.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation, and invited questions and comments from the Committee, which were responded to.

AGREED: That, the Committee endorsed the approach taken by the R&D Panel, in the setting up of a Working Group to look at the complex in more detail. The Committee also welcomed the fact that two members of the Working Group were members of the Committee.

- RETURN TO OPEN SESSION –

11 **UPDATE ON KING'S LYNN SPECIAL EXPENSE CHARGE**

The Assistant Director reminded those present that as part of their terms of reference the Committee could make recommendations on priorities for the expenditure and if appropriate the level of funds to be raised through Special Expenses within King's Lynn.

The report to the October Committee meeting, set out the range of options for Special Expenses, and was based on the Committee's work on the various topic areas during the last year. At that meeting, KLACC made a number of recommendations, set out at page 27 of the report, which included recommending an increase of £2.50 in Special Expenses resulting in a Band D charge of £48.73.

However this level of increase could push the overall council tax increase over the £5 threshold triggering the need for a referendum, which was simply not realistic and the Committee was asked to reconsider this particular element of their recommendations.

In response to a comment from Councillor Joyce, the Executive Director – Finance explained that on 19 December 2017, the Government published the Referendum Principles relating to council tax increases for 2018/19, as set out in the report. The referendum principles applied to the combined increase in council tax for special expenses and the borough council tax.

AGREED: That, the Committee amends its previous recommendation on Special Expenses, made at the 19 October meeting, by removing proposal (4) for a proposed additional £2.50 on Band D Special Expenses for King's Lynn, which encompasses the increase for the Parish Partnership Scheme and Public Toilets.

12 **CABINET'S FORWARD DECISION LIST**

The Committee noted the Cabinet's Forward Decision List.

13 **COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted its Work Programme for 2018/19.

With regards to the Parish Partnership Scheme, the Assistant Director advised that the bid had been submitted to the County Council. Once a decision had been received he would advise the Committee.

14 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Monday 26 March 2018** at **6pm** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn**.

The meeting closed at 7.42 pm