

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, 11th December, 2018 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors P Gidney (Chairman), Mrs J Collingham, C J Crofts, M Chenery of Horsbrigh, P Kunes, C Manning, T Smith, A Tyler, Mrs E Watson and D Whitby

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor I Devereux – Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor B Long – Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health

Officers:

Jemma Curtis – Regeneration Programmes Manager

Philip Eke – Tourism Support Officer

Ray Harding – Chief Executive

Matthew Henry – Property Services Manager

Peter Jermamy – Principal Planner (Policy)

Ostap Paparega – Regeneration and Economic Development Manager

By Invitation:

Representatives from Graeme Massie Architects and AECOM

RD62: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Beales.

RD63: MINUTES

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

RD64: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

RD65: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD66: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

RD67: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman had received correspondence from Councillor Bird, requesting that an item be added to the Panel's Work Programme. The item related to businesses in Hunstanton and the Chairman agreed that the email be forwarded to the Panel for information.

The request from Councillor Bird would be considered at the next sifting meeting and added to the Panel's Work Programme.

RD68: **TOURISM UPDATE**

The Chairman informed the Panel that the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager would be leaving the Council. The Panel thanked the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager for his involvement and support to the Panel.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager presented the Panel with information on tourism, as attached and contained within the report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The following was highlighted:

- The value of the visitor economy was significant and there had been an increase in visitors.
- Year on year comparisons were shown in the presentation.
- Lots of printed marketing material was produced as well as digital marketing including websites and apps. There had been an increase in hits on the Visit West Norfolk website and the apps were proving popular.
- Marketing material was sent to coach companies by the Tourist Information Centre and King's Lynn was featured in coach magazines.
- Focussed marketing was also carried out including explorer trails for the Southern part of the Borough.
- The Council worked in partnership with local, regional and national organisations to promote West Norfolk.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager for his presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Crofts referred to coach trips and he felt that King's Lynn should do more to promote coach trips to King's Lynn. He explained that he had carried out some research and could not find many trips to King's Lynn on coach operator websites. Councillor Crofts commented that one of the reasons for the lack of coach trips could be because King's Lynn was not user friendly. He felt that more central coach parking was required which was close to the river front and historic

core. Councillor Crofts also raised concern that the Council did not have a permanent Tourism Manager since the previous Manager had left the authority.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, Councillor Mrs Nockolds commented that tourism was extremely important for King's Lynn and she was proud of the work that the tourism department carried out. She commented that they worked hard and had taken on extra staff to work with the Tourism Support Officer. Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that West Norfolk was promoted to coach companies. She provided a list of some of the operators to which marketing material was sent and commented that coach trips did come into King's Lynn.

Councillor Smith asked if QR codes were used in marketing material. The Tourism Support Officer explained that there were apps which could be downloaded and QR codes had been used up until recently but this culture was now dying out. It was also noted that flyers had been produced to promote the apps and they were also referred to in written material.

Councillor Mrs Collingham asked Members if there was enough of an offer in King's Lynn for visitors to spend the day. She did not think there was. She commented that the retail offer would not satisfy someone for a whole day and the historic buildings did not have facilities to attract people, for example a coffee shop.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, Councillor Mrs Nockolds commented that the Discover King's Lynn map did provide details of the historic buildings, was well used and visitors could walk certain trails. She felt that there was an offer for visitors and made reference to the light projections which drew visitors in for the evening. The Vice Chairman, Councillor Kunes reiterated the comments made by Councillor Nockolds and he commented that facilities were available in historic buildings and provided True's Yard and the Corn Exchange as an example.

Councillor Smith commented that one of the draws to King's Lynn could be that the historic buildings were still serving their original purpose rather than being commercialised and this could provide a much more authentic experience.

The Leader, Councillor Long referred to the app and explained that it contained information on where to eat and drink in King's Lynn. He asked if the tourism department worked with the food hygiene department to ensure that places which were advertised were up to standard. The Tourism Support Officer explained that checks were carried out on an annual basis and only premises with a rating of three and above would be included on the app.

Councillor Crofts felt that although King's Lynn was doing well with tourism, there was more that could be done including promoting King's Lynn to more coach operators as he did not feel that King's Lynn was represented as well as it should be.

The Chairman, Councillor Gidney commented that KL Magazine had a good archive of photographs which could be good to promote the area. In relation to the concerns raised by Councillor Crofts he asked officers to investigate if coach parking could be considered along Boal Quay.

The Chairman, Councillor Gidney made reference to some of the street traders in King's Lynn and he felt that guidance to market traders should be provided on the appearance of their stalls. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Long commented that they did have to adhere to food hygiene criteria, but there were currently no standards in place relating to their appearance.

Councillor Mrs Collingham asked if coach operators had been contacted to ask why they did not choose King's Lynn as a destination. The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that marketing packages were sent to 64 leading coach companies. He suggested that some follow up work could be carried out by the Tourist Information Centre by phone.

Councillor Mrs Watson commented that visitors could come to King's Lynn for either shopping or the historic area and that more promotion was required on the historic area. The Leader of the Council referred to the range of shops available in King's Lynn and the decline of specialist independent retailers. He explained that the retail offer needed to appeal to the whole family in order for King's Lynn to be a destination for shopping.

RESOLVED: 1. The Panel thanked the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager for his involvement in the Panel and wished him well in his new job.
2. The update was noted.

RD69: **RAILWAYS UPDATE**

The Chief Executive and Principal Planner presented an update on Rail Services, as attached.

The Chief Executive provided the Panel with information on the groups and organisations which had been established to drive the improvements required. The Ely Area Improvements Task Force met on a monthly basis to guide the process and this Task Force fed into an annual MP summit. A Project Board had also been established to make decisions on the practical implementation and operation.

The presentation provided an update on the following:

- Eight car train project.
- Service issues
- Ely area improvements
- Track redoubling
- Wisbech to March Rail reopening
- Next steps

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive and Principal Planner for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Smith commented that quadruple tracks would be important in some areas, such as Welwyn, and he explained that consideration should be given to the even longer term including where else trains should go from King's Lynn, for example direct to Norwich and Peterborough.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Long explained that he had met with the organisation involved in the reinstatement of the line from King's Lynn to Hunstanton to discuss their aspirations. He explained that if the Wisbech to March line did not cross the A47 and ran alongside it instead there may be more scope to extend flat track to provide the King's Lynn to Hunstanton link.

Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsbrugh commented that the double track and eight car project was very important as trains were regularly busy with standing room only.

Councillor Smith referred to improvements to rail signalling which were hopefully to be rolled out across the country and he felt that this, along with the double track would make significant improvements.

The Chief Executive commented that the process was very competitive, therefore the organisations involved in the projects in this area needed to be focussed and committed to progress. He felt that this area was ahead of some of the other area schemes and this needed to continue.

The Chairman, Councillor Gidney thanked the officers involved in the project for progressing the schemes and recognising the importance of the issues.

RESOLVED: 1. The report was noted.
2. The organisation involved in the King's Lynn to Hunstanton line be invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

Representatives from Graeme Massie Architects and AECOM were present at the meeting and provided the Panel with a presentation on Nelson Quay design development and results of the public consultation. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Panel was reminded that they had previously been presented with three options for the Nar Loop and the Panel had supported that the area be developed as a wetland area. Information in the design of the wetland area was provided to the Panel and this had been made available for public consultation.

The Panel was also provided with information on the public consultation process which had been carried out and stakeholder workshop sessions. The public consultation ended on 6th December and further analysis was still being carried out. The full results would be circulated to the Panel once available.

The Chairman thanked officers and the representatives from Graeme Massie and AECOM for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Kunes referred to a recent article in the press regarding the name of Nelson Quay. He commented that Nelson was a well-known name and felt that it was a fitting name for the development area for marketing purposes.

Councillor Mrs Collingham commented that the design looked attractive. She asked for consideration to be given to the installation of play equipment along the quayside which would attract families. She suggested that the play area could be boat themed to reflect the surrounding area.

Councillor Smith commented that the surrounding area was made up of narrow streets with little green space area, therefore the development would not only benefit the quayside it would provide the benefit of greenspace to the people who lived close to the area.

Councillor Mrs Watson stated that the public exhibition was very good and she had been very impressed.

The Chairman, Councillor Gidney commented that landscaping was important and he hoped that consideration would be given to the climate on the waterfront. He explained that it was important to have a theme for the style of architecture and landscaping.

RESOLVED: The information was noted.

RD71: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

The following items were identified for consideration to addition to the Work Programme:

- Councillor Bird's request regarding Businesses in Hunstanton.
- King's Lynn to Hunstanton Railway Line
- King's Lynn Transport Study update.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

RD72: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on Tuesday 29th January 2019 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm