

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Wednesday, 25th November, 2015 at 6.00 pm in the Wembley Room, Alive Lynnsport, Greenpark Avenue, King's Lynn, Norfolk

PRESENT: Councillor C Sampson (Chairman), L Bambridge, Mrs S Collop, P Colvin (substitute for Mrs S Fraser), G Hipperson, J Moriarty, T Smith, Mrs S Squire and Mrs J Westrop

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor A Lawrence – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community
Councillor B Long – Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health
Councillor D Pope – Portfolio Holder for ICT, Leisure and Public Space

Officers:

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director
Duncan Hall – Strategic Housing Manager
Vicki Hopps – Environmental Health Manager
Honor Howell – Assistant Director

By Invitation:

Victoria King – Leisure Development Manager
Peter Lemon – Chairman Alive Leisure
Nina McKenna – Head of Programming and Marketing – Alive Leisure
Simon McKenna – Chief Executive – Alive Leisure
Roger Partridge – Senior Development Manager – Alive Leisure

EC1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bower, Daubney, Fraser and Rochford.

EC2: MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes from the joint meeting held on 28th October 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EC3: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sampson declared an interest in EC10 as a Member of Freebridge Community Housing Board.

EC4: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

EC5: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Moriarty – EC8, EC10 & EC11.

EC6: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EC7: MATTERS REFERRED TO THE PANEL FROM OTHER COUNCIL BODIES AND RESPONSES MADE TO PREVIOUS PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS/REQUESTS

The Panel noted the responses made by Cabinet to the recommendations from the Joint Panel Meeting held on 28th October 2015 in respect of the following items:

- Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Fees
- Gambling Act Policies
- Licensing Act Policies

EC8: LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed representatives from the Leisure Trust to the meeting.

The Chairman of the Leisure Trust, Peter Lemon reminded those present that Alive Leisure were now half way through their first full year of trading. He informed the Panel that Alive Leisure had recently held their first public Annual General Meeting which had been attended by a few members of the public.

The Chairman of the Leisure Trust explained that he was nervous at the outset of the complex arrangements, but all involved had worked together and structures were in place. The Chairman of the Leisure Trust explained that the Trust and the Council were working together to resolve some outstanding issues. He referred to the budget and efficiency savings being considered by the Council and acknowledged that the Trust would not be exempt from this and would work to be as efficient as possible.

The Panel was reminded that an Alive Leisure Board had been established and the Chairman of the Leisure Trust commented that they were very enthused and an active board who dedicated a lot of time and effort to the Trust on a voluntary basis.

The Chairman of the Leisure Trust clarified that, contrary to a recent report in the press, Alive Leisure had achieved a £100,000 surplus after the profit sharing arrangement with the Council. The £200,000 reported in the budget was the seed funding which had been provided by the Council for the start-up of the arrangements.

The Panel received a presentation from representatives of the Leisure Trust as attached.

The Chief Executive of Alive Leisure reported on Key Performance Indicators and Key Business Plan Priorities. The Senior Development Manager and Leisure Development Manager provided information on sport and leisure development including events and grant funding opportunities.

The Head of Programming and Marketing provided the Panel with an update on improvements made to Alive Oasis, the Alive rewards scheme and the Corn Exchange Programming.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Alive Leisure for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He thanked officers for their presentation. He referred to the information provided by the Head of Programming and Marketing and asked if they knew in advance that the pantomime of Robin Hood would not be as popular as previous shows. He also asked if the Rural Transport Fund was used to bring people in to the Open Day. Councillor Moriarty asked for an update on the online bookings system.

The Head of Programming and Marketing explained that she knew in advance that Robin Hood was not one of the strongest titles for a Pantomime. She informed those present that there were five key Pantomimes, the strongest being Snow White, which was performed last year, so the decision had been taken to perform the weakest titled pantomime after the most popular. The Head of Programming and Marketing explained that the same Pantomime could not be done every year and they had to be rotated.

The Senior Development Manager responded to Councillor Moriarty's query regarding the Rural Transport Fund. He explained that people had to apply to get funding from the Rural Transport Fund and this was usually done through the Village Sports Co-ordinators. The Senior Development Manager explained that all relevant publications produced by Alive Leisure contained information on the Rural Development Fund. He informed those present that the Rural Transport Fund had not previously been used to bring in people to the open day, but this was something that could be investigated in the future.

The Head of Programming and Marketing provided the Panel with an update on the provision of the online bookings system. She explained that the bookings system used by Lynnsport had been inherited from the Borough Council. There was a lot of work involved to introduce the online bookings component to the system and work was ongoing to get it live. Problems and delays had been encountered and it was a complicated system to set up. Alive Leisure was pushing to get the system live, but at the moment it was in the hands of the external provider, and it was likely that it would be introduced in the spring. The Chairman of Alive Leisure explained that he was frustrated with the lack of progress, but it was out of his control.

The Portfolio Holder for ICT, Leisure and Public Space asked if the reason the Pantomime sales were down were because the Princess Theatre in Hunstanton were putting on a Pantomime this year. The Head of Programming and Marketing commented that she felt it was a factor, as this was the first time in a number of years that there had been local competition and the market had been split. She explained that some schools had cancelled their Pantomime booking and given the reason that they were going to Hunstanton instead.

In response to a question from Councillor Squire, the Head of Programming and Marketing explained that some of the cancelled places had now been refilled, but normally the schools performances of the Pantomime were sold out by March. Councillor Squire congratulated Alive Leisure on putting on an Autism friendly Pantomime performance but commented that she was aware that some families were put off by the cost and had decided to go to Norwich instead. The Head of Programming and Marketing explained that the Autism friendly performance cost the same as all other performances and was cheaper than Norwich.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge asked what Alive Leisure would do to promote Arts and Culture and if alternative venues other than the Corn Exchange would be considered. The Head of Programming and Marketing explained that lots of ideas had been considered. A Sadler's Wells performance would be put on in the Corn Exchange and the Corn Exchange would be the first venue in the Country to show a matinee performance and two local schools were already involved. The Head of Programming and Marketing explained that they were always investigating ways to broaden their offer and were looking to put on a ballet designed for children in the summer. Working with Creative Arts East Alive Leisure was also looking to hold a theatre performance and workshop at Alive Oasis.

Councillor Squire referred to the membership options for Alive Leisure facilities and asked why a peak/off peak membership package was not available. The Head of Programming and Marketing explained that presently there were a lot of different membership options and in the

future simpler packages would be looked at which could include peak/off peak membership.

In response to a further question from Councillor Squire the Head of Programming and Marketing explained that she worked with various promoters and was always looking to put on a varied programme of events.

The Chairman of Alive Leisure Trust hoped that the presentation had provided information on how Alive Leisure worked to continue to improve and enhance their offerings whilst meeting their charitable objectives. He commented that the Trust had been open and honest and reported the bad along with the good.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Alive Leisure for their report.

RESOLVED: (i) The update was noted.
(ii) The Panel continue to receive updates on the work of Alive Leisure.

EC9: **CABINET REPORT - HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING CONDITIONS REVIEW**

The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) presented the Cabinet report and explained that the Council's procedures and conditions required updating following various changes in legislation since the last conditions were approved by Council on 30th June 2011. The guidance on the relevance of convictions had also been reviewed.

The changes to the procedures and conditions went out to consultation with the trade and the consultation document and responses were attached to the Environmental Health Manager's report.

The proposed amendments to the procedures and guidance had been included as an appendix to the Environmental Health Manager's report.

The Chairman thanked the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) for her report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Squire referred to the change in legislation in that operators could now sub-contract to operators in other areas. She commented that different Local Authority areas would have different conditions and standards and asked if the Council's conditions were more restrictive than neighbouring authorities. The Environmental Health Manager explained that the Council's conditions meant that all licensed vehicles were of a set standard. The conditions meant that the fleet in the Borough was the best it could be. She acknowledged that some neighbouring Authority conditions were not quite as restrictive.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that the effect of allowing operators to sub-contract outside of the Borough was as yet unknown. It would be monitored and any complaints would be investigated in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Housing, Councillor Lawrence felt that the Borough's conditions had ensured that the fleet of vehicles in the Borough were of a high standard and he was proud of the clean smart vehicles which were licensed in the Borough. He explained that the ability for operators to sub-contract outside of the Local Authority area was set out in legislation and therefore was out of the control of the Council. He explained that it would be monitored.

Councillor Mrs Collop referred to part 2.2 of the amended conditions which related to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Right to Work Check. She asked what the cost of this process was. The Environmental Health Manager explained that an enhanced check was carried out which cost in the region of £49. An administration fee was added to this. Amendments to the fees were being considered by full Council at their meeting on 26th November 2015.

The Portfolio Holder for ICT, Leisure and Public Space referred to page 53 of the report which related to insurance documents. He asked if the Certificate of Insurance could be displayed in the licensed vehicle so that patrons know that the vehicle was adequately insured. The Environmental Health Manager explained that the driver would not be issued with a licence if they were not appropriately insured and all other necessary checks had been carried out.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet as set out below:

The Council adopt the revised procedures and conditions.

EC10: **CABINET REPORT - FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING REPRESENTATION**

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the Cabinet report which proposed the establishment of a structured forum involving Freebridge Community Housing and the Council. He explained that the forum has been proposed to include two meetings a year and provide an opportunity to ensure that respective priorities are understood; that new opportunities are explored; and that challenges and risks are identified.

The Strategic Housing Manager explained that meetings were held between the Council and Freebridge Community Housing and the report sought to formalise the arrangements. Terms of Reference had been proposed by Freebridge Community Housing and were attached to the report.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Housing Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Smith referred to the membership of the Strategic Forum and asked if Councillors would be provided the opportunity to attend these meetings to raise any issues. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community, Councillor Lawrence explained that there were other methods for dealing with individual constituent issues without taking them to the strategic level. He explained that the purpose of the Strategic Forum would be to ensure that the Council and Freebridge Community Housing continued to work together and progress in the future.

The Strategic Housing Manager explained that if Councillors had strategic issues to raise, they could do so via the relevant Councillor or officer who could, if appropriate, raise the issue at the Strategic Forum meeting. He explained that the operational meeting would be undertaken in a more structured way. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community, Councillor Lawrence reminded those present that Freebridge did have a Tenants Panel and tenant representatives on the Board.

In response to a further question from Councillor Smith, the Strategic Housing Manager agreed to clarify if minutes from the Strategic Forum meetings would be available to Members of the Council.

Councillor Hipperson asked if the establishment of the Strategic Forum would impact on those Councillors who had been appointed to the Freebridge Community Housing Board. The Chairman explained that it should not have any impact. The Strategic Forum was an additional meeting. The Panel was reminded that regular meetings between the Council and Freebridge already took place, but no formal arrangements were in place.

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He sought clarification if the Agendas and Minutes of the Strategic Forum would be a public record and the Strategic Housing Manager agreed to clarify. Councillor Moriarty also sought assurance that the creation of the Strategic Forum would not dilute the influence of the Council representatives on Freebridge Community Housing Board. The Strategic Housing Manager explained that the Strategic Forum would not be a decision making body and that this proposal did not present any changes to the Board's Constitution. The Strategic Forum would be a mechanism for sharing information and updating each other on progress and current issues.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge commented that the Strategic Forum would be a good way of communicating between organisations and keeping each other up to date. She explained that when she was on Freebridge Community Housing Board she provided

updates to Members as appropriate on work of the Board and it would be valuable to the Panel if current Board Members were to do the same.

In response to a question from Councillor Westrop, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that discussions would be help on the operation of the Strategic Forum and operational structures would be put in place. If required an action plan could be produced and current mechanisms could be reviewed.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

- (i) To agree the proposed terms of reference to a strategic forum between the Council and Freebridge Community Housing as set out in the report.
- (ii) To agree that the Leader and the Portfolio older with responsibility for Housing, along with the Chief Executive, represent the Council at the proposed forum.

EC11: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He reminded those present that at a previous meeting he had asked if the Panel would be considering the Channel Shift report which had been presented to Cabinet. The Chairman explained that all Panel Chairman and Vice Chairman met at a joint sifting meeting to consider which Panel's should consider items. The Channel Shift Cabinet report had been presented to the Resources and Performance Panel and all Members had been invited to attend the meeting.

Councillor Moriarty asked if the Panel would consider the Statement of Community Involvement Cabinet report at its next meeting and the Chairman explained that this would be determined at the next sifting meeting.

Councillor Moriarty suggested that the Panel's Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Decision List include a column to explain which body was considering the reports and who would be the decision maker. The Chairman agreed to discuss this at the next sifting meeting.

Councillor Mrs Collop asked if a representative from Norfolk County Council would be coming to a future Panel meeting to provide an update on Highways Works. It was confirmed that this had been scheduled on the Work Programme in February 2016.

RESOLVED: (i) The Work Programme and forward decision list was noted.

(ii) Items discussed to be added to the Work Programme as appropriate.

EC12: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 6th January 2015 at 4.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm