

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

GOVERNANCE TASK GROUP

Minutes from the Meeting of the Governance Task Group held on Tuesday, 22nd October, 2019 at 2.00 pm in the Meeting Room 2-1 - Second Floor, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor I Devereux (Chair)
Councillors A Kemp, B Long, G Middleton and J Moriarty

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Collop

Officer – S Winter

1 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting on 4 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

2 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

None

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

4 **CONSULTATION WITH ALL MEMBERS**

Terry Huggins, EELGA consultant explained the meeting was to deal with the proposed format of the all member consultation session booked for 5 November.

The format of the night would be a short presentation in “world café style” with small groups at tables. One member of the Task Group would act as facilitator for each of the tables, and would record and capture the views given on the questions from the table.

The second phase would be to feed those views in centrally to see if there are any themes emerging.

In discussing the presentation and the engagement of Councillors on the night the debate moved to the views and experiences of different councillors and the views expressed by the public. Views ranged from needing to consult with the public and to comments received from the public that they didn't have a view on the structure, but on the outcomes and decisions.

The Task Group was reminded that this meeting was not to hear the arguments for differing views at this stage, but to prepare for 5 November.

In working through the slides, it was requested that some knowledge of the structure of the different hybrids would be useful. An example of an authority in Kent was touched upon, which it was pointed out seemed to have duplication.

The following points were raised:

- Officer only views tended to come out from the Committee system.
- A committee system permitted more potential for members to initiate ideas.
- Need more opportunity for evidence based decisions.
- Need to know what works elsewhere
- Public opinion and openness in decision making
- How does a specific small party of Council tax payers work.
- Accountability for decision making with each system needed to be clear
- Items not reported in through Cabinet at CC where were previously in committee system.

It was suggested that examples could be given of how a decision would be taken in each scenario using something such as deciding on the Refuse Contract and associated decisions.

Following the session with members the feedback would be captured and used for design principles.

A discussion was held on parish council and KLACC consultation on the structures. It was noted that KLACC were Councillors for the unparished area and would also attend the all councillor session. As it had been suggested at the previous meeting that KLACC be consulted directly **this was agreed**.

A discussion was held on the consultation of parishes generally, following a disagreement when the Chair was trying to bring the subject to a conclusion, Councillor Kemp left the meeting, not happy with not being able to continue to speak.

It was **agreed** that senior officers could be consulted via the Extended Management Team meeting, to ascertain views on the process, resources, experience, career development etc.

The Chair reminded the Group that it was hoped to get cross party agreement on the way forward, without wasting time or setting expectations at a level which couldn't be achieved. He offered to attend a Hunstanton and Downham meeting with the vice-Chair to explain the process in case they wished to comment.

In summing up, on a parish front generally it was **agreed** that instead of visits, a letter be sent to all parishes (not just Hunstanton and Downham), briefing them on the subject and inviting any comments they may have. Any views expressed would be taken note of.

Management of the evening

Task Group members were asked to encourage others to contribute to the session, challenge sweeping statements, and encourage evidence based comments.

It was suggested that table groups should be randomly selected to ensure cross pollination

The questions to be asked were **agreed**.

Leaders were asked to communicate with their groups and encourage attendance and participation.

With regard to the timing of the meeting it was requested that the meeting start at 5.00pm. **This was agreed**.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm