

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Tuesday, 5th October, 2021 at 4.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors C Bower (Vice Chair in the Chair), A Bubb (Vice Chair), A Bullen, S Collop, M de Whalley, I Devereux, J Lowe, J Rust (substitute for S Squire) and M Wilkinson

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor P Kunes – Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor S Sandell – Portfolio Holder for People and Communities

OFFICERS:

Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive

Tommy Goode – Alive West Norfolk

Neil Gromett – Alive West Norfolk

Vicki Hopps – Environmental Health Manager

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director

EC27: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

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RESOLVED: Councillor Bubb was appointed Vice Chair for the meeting.

EC28: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sampson, Kirk and Squire.

EC29: MINUTES

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

EC30: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EC31: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

EC32: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

EC33: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EC34: RIVER LANE 3G PITCH DEVELOPMENT - CABINET REPORT

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The Chief Executive presented the Cabinet report which set out proposals for creation of a 3G pitch at River Lane. She explained that the summary of funding had changed slightly since the report had been written. An application for CIL funding had been submitted and if successful the funding from the Borough Council included in the report would not be required. It was also highlighted that the project was subject to an application to the Football Foundation and would also be subject to Planning Permission.

Tommy Goode from Alive West Norfolk provided the Panel with detail on the work carried out with Norfolk Football Association and local clubs and it had been highlighted that within local football facilities plans, King's Lynn was low on provision. He highlighted the funding available from the Football Foundation if the application was successful.

Details of the Fields in Trust status was provided, and it was explained that there was a formal process to go through to change the area to a 3G pitch.

Tommy Goode provided detail of the benefits of the 3G pitch which included better facilities, increased capacity and tackling antisocial behaviour.

The Chair thanked officers for their report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Kemp raised concern about the level of public consultation, and it was explained that local Football clubs and users had been consulted on the process. Residents would be consulted as part of the planning application process. Tommy Goode also explained that currently people paid to use the existing pitches, and this was an additional provision to increase capacity.

Councillor Rust commented that she did not see the level of antisocial behaviour in this area that officers were using to justify the proposal.

She also referred to Fields in Trust and that the project would remove space from public use. She was also concerned about noise and light pollution and the increased traffic at Beulah Street. She felt that removing green space was not inclusive and there was a lack of green and amenity space in the area. Councillor Rust also commented that many people would be unable to afford to use the space, which was currently free to use, it wouldn't help the health and wellbeing of local people and it was just a way for the Council to make money. Tommy Goode explained that discount for local residents was being looked at and a lot of free space for things such as recreation and dog walking would be retained. It would only be the 3G pitch area that would be fenced in. He made reference to other work being carried out in North Lynn to support residents and increase activity in the area. He explained that Dutton Pavilion would service the field and staff presence in the area should positively impact antisocial behaviour.

The Chair, Councillor Bower asked for detail on the 3.8 ha mitigation area referred to in the report and it was explained that this included the area to the rear of the car park where the Covid testing centre was currently situated.

Councillor de Whalley raised concerns relating to the 3.8 ha mitigation area and felt that this would be unsuitable for football or sport. He commented that there needed to be additional facilities, not a 3G pitch in place of an existing free to use pitch. He made reference to flooding in the area and the Green Infrastructure Plan which set out how we shouldn't target existing playing fields. He felt that an alternative site should be considered. He also asked if Hunstanton and Downham Market had been considered. Tommy Goode explained that more recreational space would be made available in the area and there were other pitches in the area that would be retained and available for hire, which were currently rarely used. He explained that drainage issues had been investigated and discussions had been held with the Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor Devereux felt that the proposals would improve the offer in the area and attract people to the underused area. He also reminded the Panel that the Norfolk Football Association had identified a lack of provision in the area. He asked what the lifespan of the pitch would be and if any specific drainage improvements would be required. Tommy Goode explained that the lifespan was 10-12 years, LED lights would be installed, and drainage would be looked at. He also explained that there were some Multi Use Games areas around the Borough and work was ongoing with the Purfleet Trust to try and encourage usage.

In response to a question from the Vice Chair, Councillor Bubb, it was explained that lighting would be on until 10pm at the latest and 3G pitches were designed that they could be used in all but severe weather.

Councillor Collop commented that more consultation with residents should take place. She also did not feel that the 3G pitch would last 10-12 years based on the state of the current 3G pitch which had been in situ for approximately three years. Tommy Goode explained that the 10-12 year lifespan was based on the specification from the Football Association.

In response to a question from Councillor Bullen regarding provision in Downham Market, it was explained that options would be looked at after this project.

Councillor Wilkinson asked if the costs of consultation and surveys had been considered and Tommy Goode explained that this would be picked up as part of the planning application process.

In response to a question from Councillor de Whalley it was explained that the 5-a-side pitches in the area were unsuitable for higher level sports and were more appropriate for recreational use or for younger children. Councillor Rust asked if the existing pitch could be upgraded to a 3G pitch instead and Tommy Goode explained that certain activities such as Hockey would not then be able to use it.

The Panel discussed the recommendation to Cabinet and Councillor de Whalley proposed that the Panel recommend to Cabinet that some form of public consultation with residents should be carried out and alternative sites should be looked at. The Panel discussed the proposed recommendation to Cabinet.

After being put to the vote the Panel agreed that the below be recommended to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: The Environment and Community Panel recommend to Cabinet that some form of consultation with residents should be carried out and alternative sites should be investigated for the 3G pitch.

EC35: **COMMERCIAL TEAM SERVICE PLAN CABINET REPORT**

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The Environmental Health Manager presented the report which presented the service plan for the commercial team and highlighted the work of the team. It was noted that Food authorities were required by the Food Standards Agency to set out a scheme for the planning and delivery of food law enforcement and that the service plan had to be formally adopted by the Council.

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

Councillor Rust commended the team on their hard work, especially during the pandemic. The Environmental Health Manager explained that additional staff had now been recruited.

In response to a question from Councillor Devereux, the Environmental Health Manager explained that hospitality and catering had been hit hard by the pandemic, there were problems with staff shortages, and this had sometimes resulted in corners being cut, especially with regard to cleaning and hygiene. Inspections were still being carried out.

The Environmental Health Manager also explained that food hygiene costs were down due to staff vacancies.

In response to a question from Councillor de Whalley it was explained that when dog breeders were identified, the Environmental Health team worked with Planning Control to ensure that all the necessary permissions were in place.

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

That the Council approves the Commercial Team Service Plan.

EC36: **REPORT OF THE URBAN WILDLIFE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP**

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The Chair invited Councillor Bullen, Chair of the Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group to present the report to the Panel. Councillor Bullen provided detail of the work of the Group and their proposals. He highlighted the support from external organisations and that Downham Market had now established a Wildlife Group.

The Chair thanked the Members for their report and invited questions and comments from Members, as summarised below.

Councillor Bubb commented that caution needed to be exercised if nest boxes were being advertised as a trail so that they did not get vandalised or removed. Councillor Bullen explained that the nest boxes were often inaccessible or high up. Councillor Bubb also commented that planting of 'bee friendly' flowers should be promoted on council owned open spaces. Councillor Bower commented that a lot of pollinators were already used, certainly in Hunstanton where there were bee trails in place.

The Panel considered the recommendations put forward by the Informal Working Group and agreed that recommendation two be amended to include encouraging the planting of wildlife seeds in our own communities.

The Panel also noted that the Informal Working Group would like to remain established and offered their support to Cabinet if the recommendations were to be taken forward by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations from the Informal Working Group as set out below and that the recommendations be presented to the Cabinet in the future.

1. Encourage the use of bird boxes, bat boxes, bee highways and hedgehog highways in new and existing Borough Council properties.
2. The Council to investigate providing wildflower seeds for redundant allotments and community orchards/gardens and encourage the planting of wildlife seeds in the community.
3. The Council to encourage bird feeding stations and nest boxes in schools.
4. Support of a Nest Box Trail in King's Lynn.
5. Produce literature advising how residents can help support their urban wildlife and promoting the nest box trail in King's Lynn.
6. Engage with local groups to participate in urban wildlife and the creation of bee highways.
7. Encourage Councillors to promote Urban Wildlife in their Wards and Parishes.

EC37: **PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

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The Chair invited Members of the Panel to ask questions to the Portfolio Holders which had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Bubb asked Councillor Kunes, Portfolio Holder for Environment about the new waste contract and that he thought there was to be normal collections on Bank Holidays, as this was preferred by the operatives. However, this had not appeared on the date lists. Councillor Kunes explained that he was still awaiting a response from officers and would report back as soon as the information was available.

EC38: **NOMINATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

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RESOLVED: That the following nominations be presented to Council for approval:

1. Norfolk County Council – Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Panel (substitute) – no nomination made by the Panel so the appointment would be made by Full Council.
2. Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillor de Whalley (substitute)

EC39: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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Councillor Kemp informed the Panel that she had send some questions to Norfolk Constabulary about measures for the safety of women and girls and of people with learning disabilities in commercial settings. She had also copied Members of the Panel into the questions and would share the response once received.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC40: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 9th November 2021 at 4.30pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm