

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**COUNCIL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 30th March, 2023 at 4.45 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall,
Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillor Miss L Bambridge (Mayor)
Councillors B Ayres, P Beal, J Bhondi, R Blunt, F Bone, C Bower, A Bubb,
A Bullen, J Collingham, S Collop, C J Crofts, S Dark, M de Whalley, I Devereux,
A Holmes, Lord Howard, M Howland, G Howman, C Hudson, H Humphrey,
B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Lawton, B Long,
C Manning, G Middleton, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Nash, E Nockolds, T Parish,
S Patel, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, C Sampson, S Sandell, V Spikings, S Squire,
M Storey, A Tyler, D Tyler, D Whitby and M Wilkinson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dickinson, P Gidney,
G Hipperson, J Lowe and J Ratcliffe

C:88 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meetings of Council held on 23 February and 9 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C:89 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

C:90 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

C:91 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

C:92 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.

C:93 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i **Cabinet: 7 March 2023**

Councillor Dark proposed and Councillor Blunt seconded recommendation CAB141: Local Plan – Inspector's Letter – Recommended Way Forward.

Council debated the recommendation and the recommendations for West Winch. Councillor Joyce and Bone spoke against the recommendations. As a point of clarification Councillor Kemp pointed out that in the Cabinet meeting she had referred to the Inspectors letter re the West Winch scheme being unsustainable compared with Watlington and Downham Market which had a railway.

Councillor de Whalley questioned the presence of the Barrister at the Local Plan Task Group. He commented on the response to the A10 main rail line strategic growth corridor.

Councillor Morley drew attention to development plans for rural areas. He proposed an amendment to recommendation 3 to remove the delegation to the Chair and Vice-Chair to agree the Criteria based policy, to require the Policy to be agreed by the full Task Group. This was seconded by Councillor Moriarty.

The amendment was not accepted by Councillor Dark. Councillor Moriarty spoke in support of the amendment as he felt the Task Group was being sidelined.

Councillor Parish as Vice-Chair of the Task Group reminded members that he spoke against rural developments and reassured members that the Chair and Vice Chair would agree the final version following agreement at the last Task Group. Councillor Joyce spoke against the amendment. Councillor Dark reminded members that the recommendations from Cabinet were those that had been proposed by the Task Group to Cabinet which had agreed them.

On being put the vote, the amendment was lost.

In debating the substantive recommendation Councillor Moriarty questioned the presence of a legal representative at the meeting. He considered it was too simple a solution to the Inspectors questions.

Councillor Blunt explained that he had requested legal advice to the meeting so the Task Group had the opportunity to get the advice first hand. He reminded members that the Inspectors weren't challenging the decisions, but the evidence. He reminded members that it was a response to the Inspectors letter and they would then come back, it would go out to consultation and come back to the Task Group and Council.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried.

Councillor Dark proposed the following recommendations, seconded by Councillor Middleton.

- CAB142: Review of Unreasonable Complaints Policy
- CAB143: LGA Model Code of Conduct

CAB144: Members Allowances Scheme 2021-2025 – It was noted that there was no change to the scheme, just the date range of the Scheme.

CAB146: Freedom of the Borough Update.

CAB147: Governance Review Task Group – Councillor Ryves suggested that the County Deal item should be referred to the Task Group for consideration. It was agreed that the Task Group was not the correct place for this to be considered.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 7 March 2023 be approved.

C:94

NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor Parish and seconded by Councillor Dark proposed the following Notice of Motion (6/23):

“This Council has received briefings on the County ‘devolution’ Deal currently being considered by Norfolk County Council.

In light of these we note that there is nothing in the ‘deal’ currently that impacts on the powers and sovereignty of this council and more money could be coming to Norfolk as a consequence of it.

However, the ‘deal’ text is currently out to public consultation and going through Parliament before a final debate and decision at Norfolk County Council at around December 2023, so alterations in the coming months are a real possibility.

Consequently, this council believes it is prudent to reserve it’s final position on the ultimate ‘deal’ at this time and instructs officers to continue engaging on behalf of West-Norfolk, focussed on 3 areas; this council’s powers and sovereignty remain undiminished; West-Norfolk will have a fair say in the priorities being set for any new funding under the ‘deal’ and West-Norfolk will have a fair opportunity to access such funding with a report being brought before council promptly if anything material to the above changes or in sufficient time for consideration and debate to occur and a clear public position to be taken before the County Council decision in December 2023.”

In debating the Motion, Councillor Morley proposed the following amendments which were seconded by Councillor de Whalley:

Consequently, this Council believes it is essential to reserve now its final position on the ultimate “deal”, and instructs oOfficers to continue to engage in the consultation process with the objective of delivering on the following agenda.

1. This Council’s existing powers and sovereignty to remain undiminished.

2. Ensure a fair and equitable debate amongst all interested parties to secure an equitable outcome but also having regard to the further agenda.
3. Apportionment of funds at day 1 and in the future to be based on proven evidence of need and clear improvement opportunities. The era of “shovel ready” projects (revenue or capital) to stop.
4. Funding to recognise that we are a gateway to the North Sea, Hanseatic, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire and our needs, such as transport, road and rail infrastructure and business clusters vary from others.

A report is to be brought promptly before Council if anything material occurs which will frustrate this Agenda being secured and in sufficient time for consideration and debate to permit a clear and open position to be taken before the County Council decision in December 2023

The amendments were not accepted by Councillor Parish. In debating the amendment Councillor Long commented that he was part of the Group at the County Council looking at its Constitution, and would not support anything not acceptable for the Borough. Councillor Dark commented on the lateness of the amendment which had not been circulated. He re-iterated the contents of the original motion. On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

Councillor Ryves proposed a further amendment – that the pros and cons of the County Deal be prepared in order for Council to be informed for its response. This was seconded by Councillor Joyce. Councillor Parish declined to accept the amendment.

Council debated the amendment, Councillors Morley, Bone, Joyce, Rust and de Whalley spoke for the amendment. Councillors Dark and Middleton spoke against. Councillor Lord Howard referred to the poor drafting of the legislation for the Bill. Councillor Moriarty informed Council that he would abstain as he also sat on the County body considering the matter.

In summing up Councillor Parish referred to the content of the substantive and assured members that it contained the necessary information and instructions to gain all the required information.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

In debating the substantive Councillor Kemp suggested an amendment to reject the deal. It was confirmed that this would substantially amend the substantive motion. Therefore, this was not permitted.

Council debated the motion, and in summing up Councillor Parish commented that his earlier motion had now changed as there was further information provided. The decision did not have to be taken

urgently, but did instruct officers to find out more and report back swiftly after the election.

On being put to the vote the Motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Motion be approved.

ii) Councillor Sandell, seconded by Councillor Dark proposed the following Notice of Motion (7/23):

As this council comes to the end of its term and reflects back on an unprecedented, exceptionally demanding four years it formally thanks its staff, partner councils and agencies, partner charities and the many local volunteer groups and individuals who have worked flexibly, diligently and effectively to support and move West Norfolk forwards throughout this time.

Councillor Long supported the motion commending the Council's staff for their work in the preceding four years, particularly with the pandemic.

Councillor Kunes commended the work of officers to make the achievements they had done over the previous term.

Councillor A Tyler thanked staff for their constructive advice, assistance and support during his 25 years as a councillor.

Councillor Rust proposed an amendment to the motion "that staff be given a 10% pay award for the following year". This was seconded by Councillor Bone.

Councillor Dark commented that whilst appreciating the sentiment could not accept the amendment. He referred to meetings held with staff organisations in order to go through the proper processes which had already commenced for the coming year.

Councillor Joyce commented that he did not have the financial detail. Councillor Moriarty commented that it was a new issue and had not been able to think through the consequences of the proposal.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

In debating the substantive on behalf of Councillor Sandell, Councillor Middleton commented that no one had expected the pandemic, the war in Ukraine or the cost of living crisis. He made reference to some of the things which staff had done in that time and worked hard for the people of the Borough.

Councillor Joyce made reference to the staff in the Revenues and Benefits department who had given out large amounts of grant during this time. He referred to staff being able to work from home during this time.

Councillor Humphrey commented that as Mayor he had seen the benefits of the work carried out during that time. He drew attention to the good working arrangements with contractors such as the Refuse and Recycling contractors who had continued to work in difficult circumstances.

Councillor Lawrence referred to the “All In” campaign where officers had worked to bring in rough sleepers. He referred to the fact that the Council wasn’t shut down during that time and thanked staff.

Councillor Jones asked for his thanks to be passed to those officers responsible for clearing the alleyways in North End which had been fly tipped.

Councillor Parish reminded members that parish councils were also working during the pandemic.

In summing up Councillor Dark drew attention to the happenings of the last 4 years and the work carried out by staff and thanked the staff who had delivered in the last 4 years.

The substantive motion was put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That the substantive Motion be approved.

C:95

CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillor Dark moved the Cabinet Members reports en bloc. This was seconded by Councillor Middleton.

Councillor Morley asked whether grant monies had to be paid back on air source heat pumps, to which Councillor Kunes disagreed.

Councillor Bone in expressing delight at the North End Alleyways being cleared asked how they would be kept clear. Councillor Kunes explained that it had taken so long to do as the ownership of the alleys was in question, he drew attention to the issues having to be dealt with during the clearance.

Councillor Kemp suggested that the training pledge should be used to train young people to work with Freebridge to bring houses back into use. Councillor Sandell commented that Freebridge had recently provided an update to all councillors on those delays.

In response to Councillor Crofts question on when it was expected to have an update on the Local Plan Examination, Councillor Blunt stated that the work was almost complete and he would be discussing the criteria based policy with the task group Vice-Chair in readiness for the 26 April deadline. From there the Inspectors would decide if it was acceptable and make recommendations on the soundness of the

process and following a consultation process it would come back to the Council for further consideration.

Councillor Parish asked whether Councillor Blunt's portfolio was too large to which he responded that it was helpful when Deputy portfolio holders were in place, he also hoped that the changes to the staffing structure would help.

Councillor Morley asked of the emergency access for Parkway had been resolved, to which Councillor Blunt commented that the County Highways department were considering it as part of condition 9 of the planning application.

Councillor Long asked if Councillor Kunes agreed that the collection of batteries was good for west Norfolk, to which Councillor Kunes commented that he was amazed at how many were being collected, and the collection of smaller electrical goods for recycling was now being rolled out.

Councillor Squires asked Councillor Kunes how prepared the Borough was for the unavoidable climate impacts. Councillor Kunes gave a run down of things the Council was doing such as raising the heights of sea banks in the Borough. He referred to tree planting but also reported that they were often vandalised. He suggested that the use of solar farms and battery storage would be a sensible approach.

Councillor Collop asked Councillor Lawrence about the reference to Gaywood Community Centre ownership, to which he explained that the similar offer was made to community groups as was made to Hunstanton.

Councillor Nockolds asked Councillor Middleton about the Soap Box Derby being held in Hunstanton that weekend. To which he advised that there were 48 carts registered.

In response to a question from Councillor Rust on the where the fine money from Serco was spent, Councillor Kunes explained that things such as solar litter bins had been purchased for Hunstanton. He also commented that contaminated bins amounted to 5-10% of bins.

Councillor Long asked Councillor Humphrey if there would be flexibility for members in for IT equipment in the new year. Councillor Humphrey confirmed there would be.

In response to a question from Councillor de Whalley on where the funding for the reduced emissions targets would come from, Councillor Kunes responded that it was hoped that grants would be available from the Government that would prove sufficient by 2030.

In response to a question from Councillor Holmes on how far from a fully staffed and experienced Planning Department was the council,

Councillor Blunt confirmed that progress was being made with new positions being filled.

Councillor Ryves asked Councillor Lawrence about KLIC and if it supported young businesses and the nature of the centre. Councillor Lawrence confirmed it was for smaller businesses without the high overhead costs and fulfilled what it was built for.

Councillor Sandell responded to Councillor Squire that at the foodbank the CAB advisor was carrying out amongst other things - benefit checks, homeless support, food vouchers café, law services.

Councillor de Whalley asked Councillor Blunt what the Guildhall re-profiling was from DHULC. Councillor Middleton confirmed that it had taken longer than anticipated to recruit the design team which had meant that some of the spend had to be reprofiled to the following year which did mean that there was little flexibility in delivery because of the delay.

The Leader's Questions

Councillor Rust asked if the Leader had spoken to Nick Markham if any money awarded to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be linked to inflation rates to maintain its value and deliver what the community needs. The Leader drew attention to the attempts made across the community and frustration at the delays, but the size of the funding required would mean many layers of Government examining the proposed spend. He hoped from the reassurance he had received from the Prime Minister and MP that the news would be forthcoming.

The Mayor closed the meeting after 3 hours

At the end of the meeting the Mayor thanked Members for their support during the last year. Councillor Collingham thanked the Mayor for her chairmanship of the Council meetings in the last year.

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm