

**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, 25th July, 2023 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillors S Bearshaw (Chair), F Bone, R Blunt, A Bubb, J Collingham, R Colwell, A Dickinson, D Heneghan, C Rose and J Rust.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:**

Councillor Moriarty – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development (remotely)

Councillor Morley – Portfolio Holder for Finance (remotely)

Councillor Ring – Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Events and Marketing

**OFFICERS:**

James Arrandale – Deputy Monitoring Officer

Stuart Ashworth – Assistant Director

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Geoff Hall – Executive Director

Nikki Patton – Housing Strategy Manager

**BY INVITATIONS:**

Consultants from BDP.

**RD13: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

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Councillor Bone informed the Panel that he would be standing down as Vice Chair to the Panel, as he had now been appointed Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

The Chair invited nominations for Vice Chair.

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Heneghan was appointed Vice Chair of the Panel.

**RD14: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Beal.

**RD15: MINUTES**

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

RD16: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

RD17: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

RD18: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

RD19: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

RD20: **BAXTER'S PLAIN FEASIBILITY STUDY**

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The Assistant Director introduced the consultants from BDP who had been commissioned to carry out design work for Baxter's Plain. The brief for the project considered the Highways layout, open space and public realm opportunities to improve the profile of the area, complement the design of the Multi User Community Hub and other development in the area.

Members received information from external consultants on the Baxter's Plain Public Realm Feasibility Study. A copy of the presentation is attached. Members were informed of the consultation process that had been carried out and the drop in sessions which had been arranged. It was noted that the work was currently unfunded, but by having the design details in place would mean that the project could be submitted for future funding opportunities.

The Chair thanked officers and the Consultants for the information provided and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Colwell referred to the use of a temporary covered area and asked that this be considered as the Spinney in Hunstanton had proved successful. The consultants explained that this option had been explored, but the area was not big enough to have an engineered structure similar to the Spinney. However there were options for a flexible small temporary covered space.

Councillor Bone welcomed the use of greenery and planting in the area. He commented that it would be good if consideration could be given to improving the area around the Multi Storey Car Park. He also asked what would happen to the catering van that was often sited on Baxter's Plain and it was explained that alternative locations could be considered if required.

Councillor Blunt supported development of the area and asked if it would be possible to remove cars entirely from the area and consider using the multi storey car park to replace the free on street parking provision.

In response to questions from Councillor Collingham, the Assistant Director explained that the scheme was currently unfunded, but would be ready as a package to submit for future funding opportunities. He explained that the Council was in discussion and dialogue with the owners of the Old Post Office Building, but as it was a privately owned building, it was not within the Council's gift to take any action.

Councillor Collingham commented that the Post Office provision across the Borough needed consideration, with so many Post Offices closing.

Councillor Rust asked for clarification on 'wayfinding' and it was explained that this would be a combination of signage and natural movement across sites.

Councillor Bubb commented that the car park outside of the Swimming Pool often got flooded and an additional free parking provision was required, closer to the area than the Multi Storey Car Park. He also asked if the Council had any powers to intervene to encourage development of the Old Post Office Building. The Assistant Director explained that dialogue was open with the owners of the building and opportunities to work together could be explored if appropriate.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan commented that this was a good scheme for a currently under used area and asked if local businesses had been consulted. It was explained that their views had been sought and feedback generally related to car parking in the area, and that is why the proposal was to maintain some on street car parking provision in the area. Local businesses would be kept up to date on the proposals.

Councillor Colwell commented that it would be good to remove car parking from the area, but acknowledged the needs of the local businesses. He asked for consideration to be given to enhancing Blackfriars Street parking area and introduce some twenty minute free car parking bays. He also commented that he supported the introduction of tree planting and green spaces in the area.

In response to a question from Councillor Blunt, the Assistant Director explained that there were funding opportunities that could be explored once the project design had been finalised.

Councillor Bone commented that consideration needed to be given to the proposed materials to ensure that they were available to complete the work.

The Chair, Councillor Bearshaw asked if there was enough cycle rack provision and the consultants commented that there was a lack of this within the Town Centre and work would be carried out to determine the need as it was thought that the Multi User Community Hub would also increase the amount of cycles in the area.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel commented on the proposals and noted the information.

RD21: **CABINET REPORT - CNC BUILDING CONTROL**

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Officers presented the report which sought agreement of the continuation of the Local Authority Building Control function carried out by CNC Building Control on behalf of the Borough Council for the next five years.

The Assistant Director provided information on the Partnership and the drivers for it which included economies of scale and cost savings.

The Assistant Director commented that he had no complaints with the current service provided and the recommendation was to continue to be part of the CNC Building Control Partnership for the next five years.

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

Councillor Rust asked if the organisation was a profit making organisation. The Assistant Director explained that there was a surplus last year and some of this had been used to address Pension issues.

The Assistant Director suggested that representatives from CNC Building Control be invited to a future meeting of the Panel to provide an overview of the Partnership and the work they carried out.

Councillor Blunt commented that he had previously acted as the Borough Council's representative on the CNC Building Control Partnership Board of Directors and he felt that the organisation worked professionally and provided a good service.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan asked if the other Local Authorities that used the Partnership would be agreeing to continue for the next five years. The Assistant Director commented that they had all agreed to continue in principle, but the decision would be subject to their formal Council decision making process.

Councillor Rust commented that more detail of the Pension issue and any deficit was required. The Assistant Director explained that it was based on accounting issues rather than a shortfall and any surplus was spread between Partners on a Market Shares basis.

Councillor Blunt commented that Board reports could be available on request and the Board worked professionally to provide the best service for all.

Councillor Bone asked what would happen if the other Local Authorities pulled out of the Partnership and the Assistant Director commented that all other Authorities had agreed in principle to continue with the Partnership. He explained that the Partnership was hosted by South Norfolk Council and was a strong model.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development, Councillor Moriarty thanked the Panel for scrutinising the item and highlighting issues and he would request additional information relating to Pensions, before the item was considered by the Cabinet.

The Executive Director commented that the Partnership was not a profit making organisation, they just were supposed to cover costs. He commented that if the service was brought back in house we would be in competition with others and costs to provide the service would increase.

The Chair, Councillor Bearshaw asked how many organisations could drop out before the Partnership became unviable and the Assistant Director commented, that although he did not think that any Authorities would drop out, the Partnership started with three Authorities and currently had five.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

1. That the Council continues to be part of the CNC Building Control Partnership for the next five years.
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director – Environment and Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration to agree the full details of the CNC partnership agreement.

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The Panel discussed the future start times of meetings and the impact it had on Councillors who worked during the day and officers.

The Panel discussed the measures in place for officers that had to work late including Time Off in Lieu and starting work later the day of, or the day after the meeting and that if this was the case then Councillors had to be mindful that officer may not be available at certain times.

Councillor Collingham asked for it to be recorded that she was concerned that the Council was under resourced and later start times could put more pressure on officers.

The Panel was reminded that they could review the start time of the meeting in the future if needed.

**RESOLVED:** Meetings of the Regeneration and Development Panel would commence at 6.00pm.

RD23: **PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

RD24: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

**RESOLVED:** The Panel's Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

RD25: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 6.00pm in the Town Hall.

RD26: **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RD27: **EXEMPT - CABINET REPORT - WEST WINCH COLLABORATION**

**AGREEMENT**

Officers presented the report which provided information on the Borough Council entering into the West Winch Collaboration agreement to facilitate the delivery of the West Winch Growth area over the next 20 years.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and officers responded to questions from the Panel.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration and Development Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet as set out in the report.

**The meeting closed at 6.58 pm**