

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, 12th September, 2023 at 6.00 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillors S Bearshaw (Chair), T Barclay (substitute for A Dickinson), R Blunt, F Bone, A Bubb, J Collingham, R Colwell, C J Crofts, D Heneghan, A Kemp, C Rose and A Ryves (substitute for P Beal).

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor M de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity
Councillor S Ring – Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Events and Marketing.

OFFICERS:

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director
Jemma Curtis – Regeneration Programmes Manager

BY INVITATION:

Heidi Bellamy – External Facilitator, Tourism Informal Working Group
Ian Parkes – Norfolk County Council

RD28: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beal, Dickinson and Moriarty.

RD29: MINUTES

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

RD30: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

RD31: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD32: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

RD33: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

RD34: **UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE TOURISM INFORMAL WORKING GROUP**

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The Panel was provided with an update on work to date carried out by the Informal Working Group. The External Facilitator provided information on the thematic sessions that had been planned and how the outcomes from the sessions would be used to form an action plan, which would be presented to the Regeneration and Development Panel in due course. A copy of the presentation is attached.

It was explained that the West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan 22-26 had been published and was available to view at https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/downloads/download/119/west_norfolk_tourism_strategy_documents. Agendas and Minutes from the Tourism Informal Working Group Meetings were also available for Members to view on the Mod Gov Intranet.

The Assistant Director explained that it was important for Members to understand the background and the work carried out to date by the Group and suggested that a session be arranged to look back at the work carried out, what had been distilled from the working group sessions and common themes which could then be reviewed by Members. The Chair agreed that this should be presented to a future meeting of the Panel for consideration.

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

Councillor Crofts commented that work needed to be done to encourage coach trips into King's Lynn. He suggested that research should be carried out on why King's Lynn was not a destination for coach trips. He commented that coach parking should be made available on the Tuesday Market Place so that facilities were nearby.

Councillor Kemp commented that the promotion of tourism was important as well as maintaining the Listed Buildings that King's Lynn had, including the Carnegie Library and the Old Post Office Building. She also commented that improvements were needed to the West Lynn Ferry to encourage visitors. Councillor Kemp stated that she had been made aware of a roof leak at the Carnegie Library and had spoken to Norfolk County Council on this issue, but had not been able to access the latest structural survey.

Councillor Bone commented that the whole of the Borough needed to be considered, not just King's Lynn. He supported Councillor Croft's

comments relating to encouraging coach trips to King's Lynn and building a package for coach operators. Councillor Bone also referred to the importance of bringing leisure into the town centre to provide a combined offer of leisure and retail. He also commented that more areas in the town centre should be pedestrianised.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley commented that modal shift was important to reduce congestion in the town.

Councillor Ryves felt that King's Lynn was not perceived as a good place to visit and issues needed to be addressed. He felt that car parking was an issue along with a lack of accommodation, meaning that only day trippers visited and overnight stays should be promoted. He also asked if work had been carried out to ascertain the profile of the typical tourist and understand why they visited the area. It was explained that the Tourism Team did carry out work relating to the demographics of visitors and an annual survey on the value of tourism to the economy was carried out. Previously specific surveys had been carried out as part of major projects and grant applications and the Regeneration Programme Manager explained that these surveys were costly, so they needed to be carried out to help with a specific purpose.

The Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Events and Marketing, Councillor Ring welcomed the comments put forward by the Panel and acknowledged that work needed to be done to promote the Borough to tourists. He commented that education was important and the area needed to sell itself and its offer but this needed to be balanced with having the infrastructure to accommodate increased tourism and acknowledged that not all areas could cope with, or want an influx of tourists. The Portfolio Holder referred to the success of the recent Heritage Open Day and hoped that this could expand in the future.

Councillor Collingham commented that King's Lynn's Heroes past and present should be used to promote the area to inspire others. She also commented that she felt digital marketing was the best way forward.

Councillor Ryves commented that there was good accommodation available across the Borough and the infrastructure needed to be put in place to link tourist areas.

Councillor Crofts commented that coach trips operating in the area often just used King's Lynn as a rest stop and work should be carried out to link King's Lynn with another local destination to make an appealing day trip. He also commented that shows at the Corn Exchange should be promoted to coach operators.

Councillor Kemp explained that there was accommodation available in King's Lynn and there were lots of simple things that could be done to promote and increase the offer available, such as extending festivals and events.

Councillor Bubb commented that a town centre caravan park would increase visitors to the town and would boost the usage of the pontoons. Councillor Bone supported this but explained that the location would need careful consideration within the residential areas.

Councillor Bone referred to Chequer House which was recently put on the market and commented that this would be an ideal location for a hotel.

RESOLVED:

1. The Panel noted the work to date carried out by the Tourism Informal Working Group.

2. The Panel asked for the following comments to be considered by the Portfolio Holder and Officers, as appropriate.

- a. Promote to coach operators King's Lynn as a day trip destination and consider the facilities available to coaches.
- b. Officers to liaise with Norfolk County Council regarding the structural survey for the Carnegie Library as required.
- c. Ongoing promotion of the whole of the Borough as a tourist destination.
- d. Future projects and plans to consider pedestrianising more of the town centre where appropriate.
- e. Look at potential opportunities to improve eye sores in the area and ensure that the historic buildings within the area are maintained as appropriate.
- f. Work with schools as appropriate and encourage young people to get involved in events such as a mini heritage day.
- g. Promotion of overnight stays in King's Lynn.
- h. Re-run the tour for Councillors of King's Lynn

RD35: **SOUTHGATES REGENERATION AREA UPDATE**

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The Regeneration Programmes Manager provided an update on the Southgate's Regeneration Area and Ian Parkes from Norfolk County Council provided an update on the STARS project. A copy of the presentation is attached.

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

The Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan asked for consideration to be given to tidying up the areas surrounding the Southgate's roundabout and the realignment of Hardwick Road. She also commented that there was a problem with congestion around Vancouver Avenue and London Road and that pollution levels needed to be considered. The

Assistant Director explained that funding was currently awarded for the STARS scheme and other funding opportunities to carry out the work set out in the Masterplan would be explored.

Councillor Bone raised concerns relating to safety around the Schools and asked if consideration could be given to making some roads one way to reduce congestion and traffic. He welcomed the introduction of green spaces in the area and hoped that the existing park, and the historic importance of it would be retained. Officers explained that the presentation showed the areas which were covered by the overall Masterplan and the areas that were covered by the funded STARS scheme. The park and landscaping across the masterplan area would be enhanced and archaeological assessments were being carried out as required. Ian Parkes explained that the proposals would go through safety audits and Norfolk County Council would look at the best way to manage traffic.

Councillor Kemp referred to comments that the work would cause more congestion at certain times and she felt that improvements to footpaths and the West Lynn Ferry would help to alleviate traffic. She also asked for guarantees that residents would have safe access from driveways and that any plans needed to be accommodating to businesses and residents in the area. The Assistant Director commented that this was a place making scheme to improve the area and it was inevitable that the improvement works would cause some inconvenience but it was hoped that work would start to change the behaviours of peoples movements around the town centre.

Councillor Colwell referred to the public consultation which proved that people wanted to see a change in this area. He hoped that consideration would be given to the safety of people walking down London Road and ensuring that there were proper cycle routes and links to the Quay.

The Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Marketing and Events, Councillor Ring welcomed the comments put forward by the Panel and acknowledged that the proposals would increase congestion during certain times, but would bring many other long term benefits.

Councillor Kemp commented that walking and cycling should be encouraged along Harding's Way.

Councillor Ryves explained that the Masterplan could not be looked at in isolation and car parking needed to be considered. He also felt that improvements should be made to Hardwick Road to make it more attractive.

Councillor Bubb referred to the car garage at the Southgate's roundabout and was advised that this area was included in the Masterplan.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley welcomed the ambition to encourage people to move away from the use of cars, the introduction of public realm and the environmental benefits this could bring. Officers explained that air quality was a consideration and assessments would be carried out as appropriate.

Councillor Crofts referred to the Frederick Savage Statue and hoped that this would be retained in the area.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was explained that STARS was at Outline Business Case stage and there would be the opportunity to refine the design and provide more detail as the scheme progressed. It was also clarified that multiple funding options would be looked at for the development sites identified in the Southgate's Masterplan.

The Chair, Councillor Bearshaw asked if pedestrian bridges had been considered and the expansion of two lanes of traffic to ease congestion and Ian Parkes explained that a range of options had been explored.

In response to a further question from the Chair, it was explained that the DfT were aware of the timescales involved to complete the project and arrangements were in place to ensure that funding could be drawn down as required.

RESOLVED: The update was noted and officers were requested to take into consideration the comments made by the Panel.

RD36: **PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

RD37: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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Councillor Kemp requested that an update on the future of the Carnegie Library be presented to a future Panel meeting.

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

RD38: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on 17th October 2023 at 6.00pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

RD39: **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.

RD40: **EXEMPT - CHAIRS DISCUSSION ITEM - TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND LONG TERM PLAN - PANEL BRAINSTORMING SESSION**

The Chair explained that he would like the Panel to consider the long term plans for the area in relation to transport and traffic.

The Panel held a discussion on the possibility of a parkway rail station and the potential benefits this could bring to King's Lynn especially with the additional housing which would be required to meet the housing needs assessment and future development. The Assistant Director explained that lots of options were being explored and a representative from Norfolk County Council could be invited to hold a discussion with the Panel on future opportunities.

Information was provided and questions were responded to by officers present at the meeting from the Borough Council and Norfolk County Council relating to the development of the Car Parking Strategy and Transport Strategy for King's Lynn over the coming months.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm