

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Monday, 16th October, 2023 at 4.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor S Dark (Chair)
Councillors S Bearshaw, P Bland, R Blunt, A Bubb, A Bullen, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop (Zoom), R Colwell, P Devulapalli, D Heneghan, B Jones, A Kemp (arrived at 4.55 pm), P Kunes, S Lintern, B Long, S Nash, J Osborne (Vice Chair - arrived at 4.50 pm), J Ratcliffe, C Rose, S Sandell, Mrs V Spikings and A Ware

Portfolio Holder:
Councillor T Parish, Leader

Under Standing Order 34:
Councillors B Anota, A Beales, M de Whalley, A Dickinson (Zoom), C Joyce (Zoom), J Moriarty, C Morley, S Ring, A Ryves (Zoom), J Rust (Zoom), S Squire (Zoom)

Officers:
Alexa Baker, Monitoring Officer
Becky Box, Assistant Director, Central Services
Lorraine Gore, Chief Executive
Honor Howell, Assistant to the Chief Executive
Wendy Vincent, Democratic Services Officer

By Invitation:
Chris Starkie, Director of Growth and Investment from Norfolk County Council (NCC)(Zoom)

CP57 **APOLOGIES**

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Beal, J Bhondi, C Crofts, D Sayers

CP58 **MINUTES**

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on 11 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CP59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors R Colwell, S Dark, A Kemp, B Long and J Moriarty declared an interest as Norfolk County Councillors.

CP60 URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

There was no urgent business.

CP61 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillors B Anota, A Beales, C Joyce (Zoom), M de Whalley, J Moriarty, S Ring, J Rust (Zoom) and S Squire (Zoom) were present under Standing Order 34.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Panel Members and Councillors attending on Zoom would not be able to participate any vote.

CP62 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

There was no Chair's correspondence.

CP63 CALL-IN

There were no call-ins.

CP64 CABINET REPORT: CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023 TO 2027

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Chief Executive presented the report which appended the new proposed Corporate Strategy for the period 2023 to 2027. It set out the priorities of the Council under four main headings and detailed the aims and ambitions. Members were advised that the strategy was not a list of projects and work streams the Council is engaging or will engage in under the Corporate Strategy and it was highlighted that it was the Council's overarching document. It was noted that the Corporate Strategy set out those priorities and key principles of the Administration for the four year period and also detailed some background data around the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk area.

The Chief Executive advised that the Assistant to the Chief Executive would explain how the Corporate Strategy fitted into the Council's process of Directorate Plans and budget setting.

The Assistant to the Chief Executive drew Member's attention to page 16 of the Agenda which set out how the Corporate Strategy fitted into

the Council's performance management framework. It was explained that Corporate Strategy was the high level overarching document which set out in broad terms the priorities and vision of the Administration. The Corporate Strategy was supported by individual Directorate Plans and those in turn were supported by other strategies and plans which included the medium term Financial Plan and the Financial Plan for each of the individual years.

The Assistant to the Chief Executive explained that the Cabinet Report set out how the Corporate Strategy fitted into the Council's performance management framework and that the Council's activities were too broad and diverse to be included within one document and advised that the other policies, action plans and projects needed to be read in conjunction with the Corporate Strategy. The Corporate Strategy itself set the framework for each of those documents .

The Assistant to the Chief Executive advised that the Strategy was produced every four years by the Administration in consultation with senior council officers. Progress was reported to Cabinet and the Corporate Performance Panel on a bi-annual basis. Alongside the Corporate Strategy there would be action plans which will be underpinned by key performance indicators and progress was reported quarterly to the Corporate Performance Panel. From the Directorate Plans there were Service Plans, for example, in the Legal Directorate and under there would be service plans for licensing and corporate governance. It was highlighted that each of the services within each Directorate would produce Service Plans, each member of the team would have an annual appraisal and would have targets set.

Members were advised that the Corporate Strategy was reviewed on an annual basis and it was important that the Council continually horizon scanned and remained agile in reacting to local, national and worldwide events.

The Chief Executive added that the delivery model would now include an Annual Monitoring Report which would be a summary of targets each year and be published on the Council's website and at the end of the year a review would be undertaken. In addition, the Chief Executive explained that the whole process fed into the Council's medium term financial planning and delivery of work streams and projects needed to be underpinned by the resources, people and the money so it all knitted together.

The Chair, Councillor Dark thanked the Chief Executive and Assistant to the Chief Executive for the report and invited questions and comments from the three Panels and those Councillors attending under Standing Order 34, a summary of which is set out below.

Councillor Long commented that it was always good to see a Corporate Strategy for the four year period. However, Councillor Long added that there were things contained within the document which

caused some considerable concern and referred to the bullet points below, on page 7:

- Manage the Council's finances through any projected budget deficit over the four financial plan.
- Investigate the creation of a town council for the unparished area of King's Lynn and the adoption of West Norfolk as the name of the borough.

Councillor Long explained that the Council would not be a Borough Council but a District Council and added that work had previously been undertaken in relation to the creation for a town council for the unparished area of King's Lynn. Councillor Long added that the King's Lynn Area Consultation Committee had looked at the financial implications of the proposal. Councillor Long asked the Leader if he considered including it within the Corporate Strategy whether he had consulted with officers as to potential financial costs, passing up the civic aspect which had been in place since 1974 (Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk) and all other activities that go on in parished areas that were parish responsibilities that by definition if a town council was created you would part away from this combined borough council and therefore leave the district with a serious funding gap, an example of which could be car parking, recreation grounds, etc. In conclusion, Councillor Long stated that it did concern him that the implications had not been considered prior to being included in the Corporate Strategy.

Councillor Mrs Spikings asked the following questions:

- How much consultation had been undertaken with the Labour group on the document and if so what exactly were the strategies which had been written into the document?
- One of the problems protecting the environment was there was a cost and asked how far did the Council go when there were some residents struggling to pay basic bills?
- Transport – in the Core Strategy 2016 it stated that the Council recognised it was a rural area and was dependant on the car to travel within the borough and asked if the Council would support more in the rural areas where flooding was experienced.

The Chair, Councillor Dark commented that he took on board the comments made by Councillor Mrs Spikings on consultation with Labour and that it would be interesting to hear the views of the Leader or officers on how detailed the consultations were and what had been included within the strategy. The Chair asked what consultation had happened with the 40% of the Council's Conservative Councillors given that the steer from the Leader in his first Council report was that he would work closely for Conservative voters and respect all Councillors and pick up on their skill set and would therefore be interested to hear from the Leader how the Conservatives were consulted on the Corporate Strategy.

Councillor Jones stated that one of the problems with the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee (KLACC) was that it was a consultative committee and the committee would like to see a constitutional change to have a budget and do things for the town. Councillor Jones added that this was the more pressing issue with KLACC at the current time.

Councillor Kemp commented that in regard to a town council this was about a better democratic representation for Lynn and all the people in it and that it should not cost anymore because it would simply a transfer of funds so the town council could have responsibility and set funding decisions in its own precept. The town council would have the right to spend and for example could set the fees for community centres.

Councillor Colwell stated that it was quite positive if the only items Councillors wished to discuss today was the investigation of the creation of a town council and that people in the room were generally excited by the Corporate Strategy. Councillor Colwell added that currently the people of Gaywood and Reffley appeared to be missing out on the ability to access funds and why should people in the town centre not have the chance to have their local infrastructure, amenities, village halls, etc improved. Councillor Colwell concluded by saying that the Council should listen to what the people of King's Lynn wanted.

Councillor Colwell stated that he had commented that it would be great to look at protecting the rivers and chalk streams in West Norfolk and added that the Portfolio Holders were interested in tweaking the Corporate Strategy to include the item.

Councillors who addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34

Councillor Dickinson (Zoom)

Councillor Dickinson commented on the proposal to create a Town Council for King's Lynn unparished. Councillor Dickinson stated that she felt that this was a quite momentous proposal and the Corporate Strategy gave a commitment to ensure the Council worked both effectively and efficiently within the resources available. It was noted that there was a prescribed legislative process that the Council would need to go through to create a town council and that there would be a significant cost and possibly one that could not be contained within the statement and as far as she was aware there was no provision in the currently four year financial plan.

Councillor Dickinson stated that the process could determine whether or not a town council was created for which costs would be incurred. If a town council was not created the costs would be aborted and would verge on being a burden to some residents as they would have paid for something that did not happen.

In conclusion, Councillor Dickinson outlined the aspects which would need to be looked into together with a whole raft of other issues and commented that that it seemed that the Council could not comply with the opening statement in relation to efficiencies and working effectively and that the Corporate Strategy seemed to have more holes than a colander.

Councillor Joyce (Zoom)

Councillor Joyce stated that he could not answer the question on consultation carried out with the Conservatives.

Councillor Joyce commented that all Corporate Strategies he had come across could be improved and the proposed Corporate Strategy was no different as people had different ideas.

Councillor Joyce referred to Local Government Reorganisation when the Council became West Norfolk District and following that became the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Councillor Joyce outlined the pros and cons of a Town Council and highlighted that there was a democratic deficit in Lynn and how that was addressed there was an attempt 20 years ago.

Councillor Joyce asked what would be on offer to the people of King's Lynn was the crucial element as to whether they would accept or reject what was on offer.

In conclusion, Councillor Joyce added that there was some work undertaken and as a result the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee was established to address the democratic deficit.

Councillor Long added that in light of what Councillors Dickinson and Joyce had said regarding the creation of a town council, in his view, could not see how that the Panel could recommend that element goes forward as there had not been sufficient work done to ascertain if the people of King's Lynn wanted a town council. Councillor Long further commented that more importantly if the cost of a town council was higher than the current level of special expenses.

Councillor Moriarty (in person)

Councillor Moriarty commented that Councillor Jones contribution was particularly interested regarding KLACC and how it could be strengthened.. Councillor Moriarty added that he too had been thinking how KLACC could be strengthened and the investigation of the town council was one approach. Councillor Jones suggestion on the constitution being amended to allocate a budget to enable KLACC to undertake projects in King's Lynn was another approach. Councillor Moriarty stated that he could not see any reason as to why the two options set out above could not be explored.

In response to comments made by Councillor Dickinson, Councillor Moriarty referred to page 7 in that the creation of a town council be investigated and acknowledged that there would be resource issues and officer time and thanked Councillor Long for his reminder that work had been undertaken previously and that there had been a task group and that he would be looking back at the minutes.

Councillor de Whalley (in person)

Councillor de Whalley stated that it was suggested that protecting the environment came at a cost but added he would argue conversely that there were many efficiency savings associated with protecting the environment and he believed that money was saved and in the long term if the environment was not protected the costs would be substantially more.

Councillor Rust (Zoom)

Councillor Rust addressed the comments made by Councillor Long regarding the creation of a town council being an extra layer of bureaucracy costing more but actually was a tier of accountability that was lacking in King's Lynn and unparished areas.

With regard to Councillor Jones point in relation to KLACC was correct because under the previous Administration the Committee had to go cap in hand to Cabinet to beg for extra funding was not appropriate to the residents of King's Lynn.

In relation to the comments made on protecting the environment, Councillor Dark in conjunction with Councillor Joyce had taken a Motion to Council on 19 October which asked to save the environment.

Councillor Rust added that there appeared to be some fundamental things missing from some of the comments made. Labour were consulted on the Corporate Strategy and the Administration listened to what they had to say. Councillor Rust went on to say that she could not recall being consulted when the Conservatives were in power.

Councillor Ring (in person)

Councillor Ring commented that as a new Councillor it had been interested to hear the debate on whether a town council should be investigated and read out the definition of "investigation" and added that it was incumbent that all those Councillors present to back the democratic process so that everyone could have a say in the matter. The Administration would look at the facts and if it was concluded that a town council was not the right way forward then the proposal would not come forward.

The Chair, Councillor Dark addressed the comments made by Councillor Ring above and that it did state in the Corporate Strategy to investigate. However, the Leader had made comments both in the press and at Downham Market Town Council available on You Tube for all to see which went considerably further than investigate. The Chair paraphrased the detail as follows: It talked around it might take three years to deliver it but we need to get it done but effectively we need to get it done in the term of this Administration because if we don't another Administration might not consider doing which was slightly more than investigate. The Chair added that in his opinion and the views of members the Conservative Group concerns was that normally with a plan(s) you lead with the best one which was most developed. The Chair went on to say that what happened with the Corporate Strategy was that with the first one that broke cover and went into the press regarding the proposal to create a town council. The Chair commented that this was the biggest change in how West Norfolk was governed in 50 years and added that in 2024 was the 50th anniversary when the Council became the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

The Chair, Councillor Dark asked if there had been detailed discussions in relation to the process, etc and the impact on residents with the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer before the Leader went out about the Corporate Strategy. The Chair informed the Panels he had been advised that those discussions had not taken place. The Chair added that the reason why he had focussed on this was because if that was the most best and developed shot what did it say about all of the other things that might be in the Corporate Strategy. In conclusion, the Chair explained that he hoped that it was investigate and that appropriate advice would be taken from the professionals.

The Chair, Councillor Dark invited the Leader, Councillor Parish to sum up.

Investigate the creation of a town council for the unparished area of King's Lynn

The Leader highlighted that the word was "investigate" the creation of a town council and also the last bullet point on page 7 as set out below:

- Investigate the creation of a town council for the unparished area of King's Lynn and the adoption of West Norfolk as the name of the borough.

This was also the last bullet point on a page which came under "Efficient and Effective Delivery of the Council's Services" and might be an indication that that bullet was not the first bullet point and was therefore not the primary mover of the Corporate Strategy. The Leader stated that he had been misquoted in the press and that the investigation of the creation of a town council would be in the second or

third year of the Administration and he had raised it because he wanted to fly the proposal and if there was total outcry then perhaps it would have stayed out of the Corporate Strategy.

The Leader advised that the Corporate Strategy would be reviewed every six months and fully reviewed on an annual basis. Those present were informed that as things changed new things might be added whilst other things might drop out.

The Leader explained that currently there had not been a great deal of public interest but there had been a recent letter in the press from a former editor of the Lynn News who was for the creation of a town council. The Leader added that he had also been stopped in the street by a member of the public who had indicated that it was a good idea to consider the creation of a town council.

The Panels were advised that the proposal was to investigate to ask questions to determine what might or might not be possible. All the details that were being asked, for example, what would happen to the Town Hall would be worked out after some investigation was carried out. The Leader added that it may be that if finance was not in a good position and there was no finance within the current Administration, if the investigation had been undertaken and it was the view of the public that they wished to have a town council then it would be up to the next Administration might have to move the proposal forward.

With regard to consultation, the Leader explained that he had raised the proposal of the creation of a town council with KLACC and the committee was unanimous that it would like the investigation to be undertaken.

The Leader advised that he had given a previous version of the Corporate Strategy to the Labour Group and invited the Group to comment on.

The Leader commented that the Conservative Group now had the opportunity to comment on the Corporate Strategy and highlighted that his office door was always open to speak to him on any potential proposals/ideas. The Leader explained that there was an underpinning document to the Corporate Strategy which set out the Council's work streams and projects, and what the statements meant and would be done to meet the overarching aims in the Corporate Strategy. It was highlighted that the list would be circulated and was not restrictive and the Leader welcomed any additions and added that Members had the opportunity to look at items by attending the policy and development panel meetings and put ideas forward for consideration on work programmes, obtain a recommendation to submit to Cabinet and if required to Council.

The Leader advised that the Administration would also be looking at the governance arrangements of changing from a Cabinet to a Committee System.

In conclusion, the Leader added that there could be an additional bullet point as an interim measure about the proposal to create a town council as set out below:

- To ensure that KLACC had a greater function and undertake its work better and improve the opportunities available.

The Leader reminded Councillors that the proposal was to “investigate” the creation of a town council in the second or third year of the Administration.

Protecting the Environment

The Leader responded to the comments made regarding rural communities and being dependent on the car as a form of transport to access parts of the borough. The Leader explained that the Administration would probably not be providing additional car parking spaces in rural communities.

The Leader explained that bullet point stated – encourage active travel by reducing barriers to walking and cycling in addition to improving electrical vehicle infrastructure and appropriate charging points. The Leader commented that this might mean working with partners, for example, the County Council to increase public transport so that people in rural areas can get into King’s Lynn or elsewhere. Councillors were advised that there was nothing in the Corporate Strategy to ban cars.

Councillor Mrs Spikings thanked the Leader for his reply but commented that as previously stated she did support rural areas as she was a ward councillor and did understand the implications of what happened and why a car was needed. Councillor Mrs Spikings stated that she had not seen anything in the document regarding rural areas which were as important as towns and added that the document was a rehash and there was nothing really new. Councillor Spikings advised that she had been involved in Cabinet and Committee Systems and both worked well and asked why tinker with yet more costs for a futile output.

Proposal to change Governance Arrangements

In response to the comments made by Councillor Mrs Spikings, the Leader explained that changing a system would cost a lot of money but it had not yet been investigated.

In response to questions from Councillor Long on the proposal for a change of governance arrangements/timeline/time delay, etc, the

Leader explained that this was a question for the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer. The Leader commented that the timeline for the next stage which was being worked on was the underpinning documents which supported the Corporate Strategy. The Leader added that any proposal to change the current system would be required to go through Council for a decision.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was a Governance Review Task Group set up by the previous Administration. The terms of reference included reviewing changing to a committee structure. The work of that group was about half way concluded and had been delayed because of Covid. A Cabinet report was presented last year stating that this work would be picked up following Election and the intention was that pick the group up. With regard to timeframes Members were advised that there was nothing specific in the task group regarding time frames/lead in times and those issues would be dealt with by the task group.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Joyce commented on the points made by Councillor Long on governance arrangements and gave an example of Norfolk County Council.

With regard to the points made on the committee system, Councillor Joyce confirmed that the Leader had spoken to him about it. Councillor Joyce outlined the positive and negatives of a committee system.

The Panels voted on the recommendation set out to Council. There were 13 votes for, 7 against and no abstentions.

RESOLVED: The Corporate Performance, Environment and Community and Regeneration and Development Panels supported the recommendation to Cabinet and Council as set out below:

That Council adopts the attached corporate strategy.

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at 5.45 pm and reconvened at 5.55 pm.

CP65

CABINET REPORT: NORFOLK COUNTY DEAL RESPONSE

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Chief Executive presented the report and reminded Members that the Borough Council (BCKLWN) agreed at the Council meeting on 30 March 2023 to make a clear public position on the County Deal for Norfolk before Norfolk County Council (NCC) made a final decision at the NCC Council meeting on 12 December 2023.

The Chief Executive advised that Chris Starkie, Director of Growth and Investment from Norfolk County Council (NCC) was present on Zoom to answer any technical questions.

It was highlighted that all Councillors had received updates and briefings on the County Deal.

Members were advised that there was no requirement for a response to NCC but the report was in response to the Motion at Full Council and included in the meantime of writing the report and going to NCC 12 December, if any other changes were needed an update would be given. The report set out broad governance arrangements and details were available on NCC website.

The Chair, Councillor Dark thanked the Chief Executive for the report and invited comments and questions from the Panels and Councillors attending under Standing Order 34.

The Chair thanked Chris Starkie for attending to answer questions on any aspect of the County deal.

Councillor Long declared an interest as a County Councillor and explained that he had been appointed to the Norfolk County Councillor Working Group which was looking at the constitution reforms and looked at what the deal meant and together with the briefings received was therefore well versed as to the current position where and why. Councillor Long outlined what this would mean for the Borough Council, where it would have a say or a veto on the proposal for an elected Leader. Councillor Long highlighted that the most important thing personally for him was adult education because a range of courses were required for different job skills available in West Norfolk.

Councillor Long sought clarification on development corporations and invited Chris Starkie to confirm that the information he had outlined to the Panels was correct. In response, Chris Starkie confirmed the information was correct and outlined the powers which were passed to the Directly Elected Leader compared with Council as a whole and indeed borough and district councils. All powers handed down from Government would be to NCC rather than to the Directly Elected Leader with the exception of the ability to establish development corporations. Councillor Long correct development corporations can only be established in partnership and with the agreement of the local authority and in this case the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and budget would need to be agreed by NCC Cabinet.

Councillor Blunt commented that he had read and agreed with the recommendations in the report and added that giving support to the negotiation process was fundamental to ensure that the Borough Council was in the game. Councillor Blunt expressed concern regarding comments made previous to this document by the Leader and emphasised the views should be from the Borough Council and

not individuals. Councillor Blunt also expressed concern on the governance and the role of the Elected Leader and how this would affect the Borough Council.

Councillor Kemp declared an interest as a County Councillor.

Councillor Kemp commented that in her view the proposal diminished the role of the Borough Council because it took away the Shared Prosperity Funding which would go to NCC in March 2025 and that there might not be any new funding available. Councillor Kemp outlined the reasons why in her view the deal was wrong for Norfolk and should not be accepted as currently proposed.

In response to the comments made by Councillor Kemp, Chris Starkie explained that the comments made by Councillor Kemp were opinions rather than facts. The Panels were informed that the investment fund would require legislation to take the money away and outlined the difference between the directly elected Leader and the current Leader.

Chris Starkie responded to questions from Councillor Bubb in relation to the allowance received by the elected Leader, what would happen if the elected Leader failed to inspire, vote of no confidence, etc.

In response to comments made by Councillor Kemp, the Chief Executive explained currently the shared prosperity funding came direct to the Borough Council and going forward there was no indication from Governance that shared prosperity funding will be available as part of the county deal. The Chief Executive advised that as far as individual projects there were ongoing discussions with District Leaders and Norfolk Chief Executives and outlined the role of the Investment Board where every district would have a representative on the Board. The criteria would be set out and included within the NCC policy framework to ensure transparency for considering bids equally.

Councillor Long commented on the points made by Councillor Bubb and explained that the Constitution could be changed for a Directly Elected Leader and outlined the options available. Councillor Long commented that it would be a Full Council decision to change the Constitution.

Following questions and comments made on the directly Elected Leader allowance, Chris Starke explained that the allowance would be set in the same way as current practice. Councillor Long added that an independent panel set Member allowances and NCC would look at and deter role and that it meant.

Chris Starkie responded to questions from Councillor Blunt on the criteria for the appointment of a Directly Elected Leader.

Councillor Dark declared an interest as a Norfolk County Councillor.

The Chair, Councillor Dark explained the Borough Council's role in the deal between NCC and Government and that the vote would take place at NCC on 12 December 2023. The report invited the Panels to express a view. The Chair outlined the variables set out in the Deal to be explored by NCC. The Chair outlined the views of the previous Administration when he was Leader of the Council. The Chair drew attention to the recommendation in the report to allow the Leader and officers to continue to engage in the County Deal discussions with NCC on behalf of the Borough Council and there was the opportunity for the Council to state if it supported or rejected the recommendation to seek the best outcome for West Norfolk. The Chair, Councillor Dark outlined the question asked by Councillor Long of the Leader at the last Full Council.

The Chair, Councillor Dark expressed concern regarding the letter from the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk in response to DHLUC formal consultation. The Chair added that he had been given a copy of the letter from Councillor Parish and that had questioned the legality of the consultation and advised against proceeding. The Chair had checked the request by the NCC Leader to sign the letter and the legality of the consultation with the Borough Council's Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer had confirmed that the question of legality had not been raised with her. The Chair expressed disappointment and concern that the correct process had not been adhered to and outlined the reasons why he was concerned.

The Chair, Councillor Dark added that there was a genuine concern that the report set out the officer recommendation to go forward with the County Deal to vote today, but the Leader had got in front and had written to one of the parties and the formal response stated he was against it and this information had also been published in the press. The Panel decision was therefore either vote with officer report or vote with the Leader's position against the proposal. The system for one reason or another had gone out of kilter.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Ryves asked the following questions:

- What was the outcome of previous court actions?
- Clarification on failure to accept the deal had previously had cost Norfolk £120m.
- Consultation undertaken with the public appeared to be unsatisfactory.
- Multiple questions relating to a directly Elected Leader, including power of impeachment of NCC councillors to end the deal.

Chris Starkie responded to the above questions and explained that with regard to the court action, a couple of district councils had served a letter which had never been followed through and July was the deadline and it was now past that date. The second point on how

much money was lost by Norfolk, it was noted this was £120m relating to housing was a good working figure by not proceeding with the deal. In response to the comments made on consultation, it was explained that consultation questions were thoroughly tested with “experts” in the field and the level of engagement was reasonably high and higher than other devolution areas. With regard to power impeachment to directly elected Leaders there were two things to note, firstly the Directly Elected leader as an individual would have to get votes through Council to pass a budget, corporate plan, etc. A workable majority would have to be formed as the Borough Council did following the May Election. Secondly, if a change was to be made to the Constitution this would be a Full Council decision.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Morley commented that he supported the Officer recommendation to support the County Deal through to Full Council. Councillor Morley added there were two aspects he would like highlighted to the recommendation as set out below:

- Leverage for priorities for levelling up and what were the priorities – education, jobs and growth.
- Partnership more widely used in the recommendations
- “West” be inserted prior to the word Norfolk on recommendation 2.

In response to the comments made by Councillor Morley, Chris Starkie explained that the meaning of leverage other funds in and provided an overview of his previous role within the Local Enterprise Partnership. Members were informed that Government was transferring the functions of local enterprise partnerships to the democratically accountable bodies and into NCC and Suffolk CC. It was explained that two Boards (Business Board and Skills Board) would be developed and would have Borough and District representatives.

Councillor Moriarty declared an interest as a Norfolk County Councillor but had not firmed up a decision in relation to the County Deal.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Moriarty commented that the Borough Council was not the only Council to have had a change of leadership in recent months and there was also a new NCC Leader. Councillor Moriarty explained that the new NCC Leader met with Cabinet in the summer and his understanding was that the Leader was responding to some discontent expressed by various Conservative District Leaders also on NCC. Officers and the Leader of Council were re-engaging in negotiations with DHLUC and Central Government in order try and improve the deal.

Councillor Moriarty added that nothing had changed from the Borough Council’s perspective since the formal response to the consultation which Councillor Dark and the Chief Executive had submitted and signed. Councillor Moriarty explained that what had happened was

that the Conservative District Leaders and the NCC Leader were keen to negotiate for the strongest position possible. Councillor Moriarty stated that in his view the district council role was simply not strong enough.

Chris Starkie responded to questions from Councillor Moriarty in regard to the recommendation set out in the report and the Council's position.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley addressed the Panel.

In response to the points raised by Councillor de Whalley in relation to the Council's position once signed up and who could change the arrangement/consultation arrangements, Chris Starkie explained that it was almost certain there would be at least one follow up devolution deal. It was noted that a level 3 deal was required to go beyond level 2 (without the directly elected leader) which was democratic choice. It was explained that this would not cover any of the sovereignty of borough or district councils but would look at some of the functions and powers of central government more locally. Chris Starkie highlighted that the virtue of the deal was not to create an extra democratic layer and that by using the existing mechanism of the Norfolk Public Sector Leaders Board would lead the consultation and that there would be both borough and district council involvement from the start. In conclusion, the Panel was advised that NCC had already been in consultation with Borough Council officers on some of the schemes put forward to enhance the negotiations to get a better deal for West Norfolk.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Rust questioned how good the deal will be for King's Lynn and that she agreed with the proposal on time to get best deal but that it was not necessarily the fairest and should be for the equitable needs of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who was equally important as Norwich because of the demographics.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Joyce outlined his reasons why he supported the officer recommendation.

Councillor Kemp outlined her reasons why she could not support the officer recommendation to support the deal.

Councillor Colwell declared an interest as a Norfolk County Councillor and outlined the reasons why he supported the recommendation.

Councillor Devulapalli highlighted the importance of getting the best deal for West Norfolk to address the education and skills needed.

Councillor Dark commented on the suggestion made by Councillor Morley and proposed that the word "West" be inserted prior to the word Norfolk on recommendation 2. Councillor Long seconded and was agreed by the Panels.

The Chair invited the Leader, Councillor Parish to address the Panel, a summary of which is set out below.

The Leader, Councillor Parish advised that he had not publicly stated anywhere he was against the Deal but had advised that he had stated that he did not think it was good enough. With regard to the letter, Councillor Parish apologised if he gave incorrect information the request came from the Leader of NCC who had chaired the Norfolk District Leaders meeting. An email was received asking Borough and District Leaders to sign the Letter on 11 July 2023 to meet the deadline prior to Government recess on 20 July 2023 and therefore there was not sufficient time to debate the letter with anyone or via the Panels or Council. Members were advised that the essential elements of the letter to the Secretary of State from all the District Leaders was to make formal representation during their consideration for a devolution deal for Norfolk. The Panel was advised that the thrust of the letter was to improve the deal for districts in Norfolk. Members were informed that a response had been received from the Secretary of State.

The Leader went on to say that part of the information in the press article was incorrect and outlined the content of article and reiterated that he had not stated publicly anywhere did not support the deal but that he wanted a better deal for West Norfolk. The Leader welcomed the addition of "West" to the recommendation put forward by the Panels.

The Leader explained that he had included the County Deal in his report to Council on 19 October and outlined the content.

Members were informed that the County Deal report would be a Cabinet decision to go forward to Full Council in November prior to the NCC Council meeting on 12 December 2023 when all Councillors would have the opportunity to debate on the County Deal.

The Leader provided an overview of a discussion he had immediately following the District Leader's meeting with officers regarding the £20m per year for a period of 30 years and the Government reduced funding to Councils.

The Leader commented on the pros and cons on the proposal for a Directly Elected Leader.

In conclusion, the Leader explained that he had never publicly stated he was against the deal and would accept the decision of Cabinet and Full Council.

The Chair, Councillor Dark read out the recommendation.

Councillor Long asked for clarification on information given by the Leader in relation to the NCC Leader chairing a meeting of Norfolk

District Leaders. Councillor Long explained that it was his understanding that the Chair of Norfolk Leaders Board alternated between NCC and one District Council, but the meeting of District Leaders did not include the Leader of NCC unless invited for a specific reason and that Chair would therefore be a District Leader. Councillor Long asked if it was a Norfolk Leaders Board or District Leaders meeting.

The Leader confirmed he could not say one way or another.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that it was a Norfolk Leaders meeting and not the Norfolk Leaders Board.

Chris Starkie added that the meeting of all Norfolk Leaders was chaired by the rotating Chair, the Leader of NCC but subsequently there was a District Leaders meeting which the Leader of NCC was not invited to attend.

The Panel voted on the recommendations set out below with the addition of the work "West" be inserted prior to the word Norfolk on recommendation 2. The vote was carried (14 for, 2 against and 1 abstention).

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Performance, Environment and Community and Regeneration and Development Panels support the recommendation to Cabinet and Council as set out below:

It is recommended that:

- 1) The Leader and Chief Executive continue to engage in the County Deal discussions with NCC on behalf of the Borough Council with a focus on:
 - 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'.
 - West Norfolk will have a fair opportunity to access such funding to secure the best deal for **West** Norfolk.
- 2) That BCKLWN gives its support to NCC to negotiate with Government to secure the best deal for Norfolk subject to 1) above.

CP66

PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

There were no Portfolio Holder questions.

CP67 **CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

The Chair, Councillor Dark invited the Panel to email him with any items for consideration.

CP68 **SHAREHOLDER FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Chair, Councillor Dark invited the Panel to email him with any items for consideration.

CP69 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Councillor Nash asked for the 2021 Taxi Testing Contract to be considered at a future meeting.

CP70 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel will take place on 13 November 2023 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm