

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel held on Wednesday, 10th January, 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors Bearshaw (Chair), Beal, Blunt, Bone, Bubb, Colwell, Crofts, Dickinson, Heneghan, Rose and Spikings (substitute for Collingham).

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor Beales – Portfolio Holder for Business

Councillor de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor Moriarty – Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration

OFFICERS:

Stuart Ashworth – Assistant Director

Luke Brown – Senior Planning Officer

Jemma Curtis – Regeneration Programmes Manager

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Oliver Judges – Executive Director

RD65: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Collingham and Kemp.

RD66: MINUTES

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

RD67: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

RD68: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD69: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

RD70: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

RD71: **BAXTER'S PLAIN FINAL REPORT**

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The Regeneration Programmes Manager presented the update. A copy of the presentation is attached. It was explained that the West Norfolk Transport and Infrastructure Group would be asked to endorse the Final Report in February 2024. The next stage would be to look at the detailed design required and explore funding options. There was currently no funding allocated to take forward the project.

The Chair thanked the Regeneration Programmes Manager for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan, commended the scheme as improvement was needed in the area and would complement the MUCH and library project. She asked about indicative costs and the Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that indicative costs had been looked at, based on current market conditions, but would be firmed up in the detailed design stage.

Councillor Crofts referred to the market and events area and asked if there was a plan in place for its use. The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that the use of the space would be driven by the buildings and property owners surrounding the area and could be used to supplement activities at the MUCH. Councillor Crofts asked Councillor Beal how well used the Spinney area was, which was a similar multi user space in Hunstanton and Councillor Beal stated that it had been used a couple of times in the past year. Councillor Crofts explained that licences would need to be in place for live or recorded music.

Councillor Colwell referred to resident engagement in the consultation and how residents had wanted more greenery and seating in the area. He felt that this would be achieved through out the project and welcomed the improvements to the area but was disappointed that one of the existing trees would need to be removed. Councillor Colwell also commented that the improvements in the area could make it more attractive to potential developers and the owners of the old Post Office building hopefully encourage investment in the area.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that they had tried to engage with the owner of the old Post Office Building and looked at previous consents for the site to ensure that the improvements complemented potential future development opportunities.

The Assistant Director commented that the improvements would enhance the space and hopefully attract investment in the area. He felt that the outside flexible use space would be well used.

The Chair, Councillor Bearshaw, was concerned that the outside space would be filled with seating and planting which would reduce the space available for events. He hoped that adequate space would be available for events to make the area attractive.

Councillor Spikings commented that it would be a benefit to the town centre if the old Post Office Building was brought back into use. She also cautioned the type of greenery proposed for the area and asked that consideration be given to non-toxic trees which did not produce sap. She also asked for consideration to be given to using trees which could provide a canopy and therefore keep the area cool in the summer. Councillor Spikings commented that a living wall was a good idea, but cautioned the use of Ivy. She welcomed the proposals for an outside events area, but did not want to see the existing trees removed as they were established and an asset to the area.

The Regeneration Programmes Manager confirmed that there would be a net gain of trees overall in the area. Councillor Spikings questioned what standard and size the new planting would be as it needed to be suitable for the area.

Councillor Bone welcomed the café culture feel that the proposals would provide, but echoed the concerns of Councillor Spikings in that planting and greenery needed careful consideration and he did not want to lose the existing trees in the area.

The Chair commented that it would be good to have a space that could be covered so that events could take place in the Winter.

Councillor Bubb referred to the Museum which was just outside of the plan area and referred to the cut through to the Museum, which was currently unwelcoming. He asked if any plans were in place to enhance the route from Baxters Plain to the Museum. The Regeneration Programmes Manager commented that this could be looked into, but access through the rear of service yards was not encouraged, and some of the area was not in the Borough Council's ownership.

Councillor Blunt welcomed the report and how comments received as part of the consultation had been considered. He asked if any future development of the Old Post Office Building could detrimentally affect the project and the Regeneration Programmes Manager explained that any redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building would have to be managed at that point in time and organisations could work together to get the best out of both schemes.

In response to a question from Councillor Colwell, it was explained that cycle parking provision was included in the scheme.

In response to a question from Councillor Blunt, it was confirmed that the project was currently unfunded, however officers would be looking at funding options and the opportunity to phase the scheme to make use of different sources of funding.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan asked if H&M had been engaged in the consultation process and the Regeneration Programmes Manager confirmed that they had. She explained that corporately H&M had set rules on their buildings, therefore two options had been included and more work would be carried out during the detailed design phase.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Councillor Beales, welcomed the Panel's comments, especially relating to trees and planting and explained that these would be considered during the detailed design phase. He explained that funding was key and officers were working with partners at Norfolk County Council to look at sources of funding.

RESOLVED: The update was noted.

RD72: **CABINET REPORT - LOCAL PLAN GYPSY AND TRAVELLER POTENTIAL SITES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

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

The Assistant Director and Senior Planning Officer presented the report which sought authority to proceed with a consultation on potential sites. The consultation would run for 6 weeks, and would help to inform a final proposed Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Policy, which would be submitted to Cabinet for approval in April 2024 and submitted for formal examination likely in July 2024.

Councillor Moriarty, in his capacity as Chair of the Local Plan Task Group informed the Panel that the Task Group had considered this report and would be submitting an additional recommendation to Cabinet that the Panel may wish to consider. The additional recommendation was:

“Delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holder, Development and Regeneration to ensure new sites which come forward from the consultation exercise be communicated in a timely manner to Borough Councillors and where possible Parish Councils.”

The Panel received a presentation, a copy of which is attached.

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

In response to a question from Councillor Crofts, it was explained that six sites had come forward following the call for sites. Additionally three Borough Council and one Norfolk County Council site had also been brought forward for consideration. It was confirmed that the Saddlebow and Blunts Drove sites were operated as public sites for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation. The Saddlebow site was owned by Norfolk County Council and Blunts Drove was owned by Hastoe Housing Association. In relation to the Saddlebow site, it was explained that this site was currently at capacity and there was a waiting list for pitches. There was no scope to extend the site due to land ownership constraints.

In response to a further question from Councillor Crofts regarding the overwhelming of sites and joint working with neighbouring Local Authorities, it was explained that the Council was required to meet their own accommodation needs for Gypsies, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, but had met with Officers from Fenland District Council to look at joint working opportunities. It was also explained that the consultation would provide the opportunity for comments to be received by stakeholders such as Fenland District Council.

The Chair agreed that it was important to look at working with neighbouring Local Authorities where possible.

Councillor Beal asked for a provision to be put in place for short term and temporary sites and made reference to issues in Hunstanton.

Councillor Bone called a point of order relating to the language used by Councillor Beal.

The Assistant Director commented that temporary stopping points and transit sites had been looked at through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and there was no need, at this time, to provide such a site. However it would continue to be monitored through the Local Plan process.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that the consultation covered more pitches than was required. This had been undertaken to explore all options and build in flexibility for when final decisions on any preferred sites were made over the coming months.

Councillor Bone commented that there was only one site identified for the north of the Borough and the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that the list of potential sites reflected where the current and future accommodation need was coming from.

The Chair asked if another site needed to be identified near to Hunstanton to address the issues raised by Councillor Beal and the Assistant Director explained that this was not necessary as in reality the sites were unlikely to be occupied. The Assistant Director informed Members that a list of FAQ's would be included in the consultation document.

Councillor Blunt explained that one of his Parishes, who would like to respond to the consultation, would not be meeting during the consultation period and asked if there was scope to extend the consultation period if required. The Assistant Director explained that individual requests for an extension of time to respond to the consultation would need to be made to the Council, who would consider them along with the Local Planning Inspectorate. It was acknowledged that the Parish Council in question were important with regard to a consultation response and officers and the Chair of the Local Plan Task Group would work with them if required to ensure their response was included.

Councillor Moriarty, as Chair of the Local Plan Task Group, commented that he had received lots of correspondence on this matter and public interest and wanted to assure the public that their responses to the consultation would be considered.

The Chair referred the Panel to the additional recommendation which the Local Plan Task Group would be submitting to Cabinet and this was discussed by the Panel. The Panel agreed to the additional recommendation being submitted via this Panel also.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below, with the addition of recommendation three in bold below.

1. Cabinet endorses the draft Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Potential Sites and Policy document, the Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment Document, the associated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal, for consultation, for a period of 6 weeks from 26th January until 8th March 2024.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration, and the Assistant Director – Environment & Planning, to include minor amendments as required to the consultation document prior to consultation starting at the end of January.
3. **Delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holder, Development and Regeneration to ensure new sites which come forward from the consultation exercise be communicated in a timely manner to Borough Councillors and where possible Parish Councils.**

RD73: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

RD74: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel was an additional meeting and would be held on 30th January 2024 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm