

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes from the Meeting of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee
held on Thursday, 11th January, 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillor J Rust (Chair)
Councillors M Bartrum, F Bone, S Collop, R Colwell, S Everett, D Heneghan,
B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, A Ware and M Wilkinson

Also present:

Councillor Anota	-	Portfolio Holder for
Councillor Moriarty		Portfolio Holder for
Councillor Morley		Portfolio Holder for
Councillor Parish		Leader of the Council
Lorraine Gore	-	Chief Executive
Michelle Drewery	-	Assistant Director Resources / Section 151 Officer
Alexa Baker	-	Assistant Director for Legal, Governance & Licensing (Monitoring Officer) & Management Team Rep for the meeting
Kathy Wagg	-	Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lowe and Sayers.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

4 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

5 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

There was no Chair's correspondence.

6 **KLACC - FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

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The Monitoring Officer presented the report to the Committee and advised that the Council had included within its Corporate Strategy for 2023 – 2027, the following:

Bring forward proposals to enable the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee (KLACC) to become a decision-making body.

The purpose of the report was to explain the potential options and limitations on what a decision-making body could look like, as part of a two-stage consultation process.

Following this consultation, terms of reference would be produced and presented to a future meeting of KLACC, with a view to proposals for a new decision-making body being submitted to Cabinet in March 2024.

The Monitoring Officer explained that there were two primary options available for creating a decision-making body:

1. A free-standing non-executive (ie. A Full Council function) committee. The Committee would have terms of reference setting out the remit in which it could act, set by Full Council. The Committee would need to be politically proportional and therefore it would not be possible to have a decision-making body solely made up of ward members from unparished areas of King's Lynn, unless Groups were willing to give up seats to enable this.
2. An executive area committee. This would also be a free-standing Committee, but legislation requires that membership be made up of only members from the area it covers. This can be set up as an executive function, which would have increased alignment with current decision-making powers which sat with Cabinet.

The Monitoring Officer also made reference to the remit and decision-making powers of the newly created body, as set out in the report. If the Committee became an executive Area Committee, then it could apply for funding such as CIL and Shared Prosperity. There would be officer support to support these applications although it would have to be a limited resource.

The Assistant Director for Resources explained that there were currently two reserves available at the moment, which could be allocated to a new decision-making body. The first sat at £10,800 and had already been approved to be allocated to KLACC and related to income generated through COVID from the use of the South Lynn Community Centre. The second sat at £35,500 and had a current allocation towards Fairstead and South Lynn community centres, however it was advised that there might be a boiler replacement at one

of the community centres committed against that sum but further investigation was required.

The Committee was also asked to consider what a new decision-making body would be called.

The Chair then asked for comments / questions from the Committee, a summary of which is listed below:

Councillor Heneghan stated that going for an Area Committee would make sense.

Councillor Kemp also supported the Committee turning into an Area Committee, as it would represent those areas without a Parish Council. She also supported the idea of the Committee having its own budget.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson, whilst supporting the proposals, stated that the money should be spent on Fairstead, as plans had started towards starting a youth club. The area did not have a community centre as such and there was nowhere for the youth club could meet.

Councillor Bone, again whilst supporting the proposals, added that care needed to be taken not to impact on Council Tax for the residents of King's Lynn. He concurred with the comments made by Councillor Mrs Wilkinson that Fairstead was in need of funding opportunities. He welcomed the idea of an Area Committee and being able to access funding.

The Chair added that she had not taken on board that establishing a Town Council would have the potential to have a negative impact on Council Tax.

What the Committee wanted was to have the ability to make its own decisions about the area and the people they represented, and this appeared to her to be that perfect compromise. We will be a decision-making body and will not be negatively impacting on Council Tax and would not be setting own precept. She was pleased with what she was hearing was a positive attitude to this opportunity.

Councillor Colwell stated that he was excited by the proposals, as he had been contacted by residents who felt that there was a deficiency in democracy for the residents of King's Lynn. He supported both the creation of an Area Committee and Fairstead Youth Club.

In terms of funding, he encouraged Members to look at match funding for schemes to make any money go as far as possible.

He considered the name King's Lynn Area Committee to be sensible.

Councillor Joyce added that the Committee should have a secure budget and questioned whether open spaces should be in Special

Expenses and considered that an Area Committee would be the best way forward.

In response to comments made by Councillor Joyce, the Chair stated that the charges that KLACC were incurring were being looked at.

Councillor Everett added that he supported the creation of an Area Committee. The Committee did need a budget, so it knew what money it had. He stated that money did need to be set aside for Fairstead.

The Chief Executive added that there did not seem to be many Community Groups, and that could be something that the newly formed Committee could be involved with to get Community Groups established and running. The newly formed Committee could apply for Shared Prosperity funding on behalf of Community Groups. With regards to monitoring special expenses, this needed to come to the Committee more regularly so that questions could be asked if there was overspend / underspend. The proposed changes would allow KLACC to start working more like a Parish Council.

The Chair added that there were lots of different funding pots out there for the Committee to apply to. The funding could also relate to the training of local community champions so that they could act and get those community groups up and running with the Committee's support.

Councillor Colwell referred to 3.5 in the report regarding caps of funding. He suggested that a cap should be put in place.

He also referred to 3.9 and how to engage with communities. He suggested that the Committee should make sure this is what residents wanted before making a final decision. He also suggested that it might be useful to have coffee mornings across the town to invite people to come and have a chat with Councillors about what they would like to see. The second element was about that on-going conversation about how the funds would be spent. He asked whether it would be useful to have a residents forum set-up.

The Chair responded that some wards did have resident's forums, Councillor Bone and Heneghan had one in their ward and for some wards it was easier to set them up than others and that was why having access to funding to train community leaders was useful.

The Chair agreed that engagement with communities was important, but this needed to be done carefully to manage expectations. She added that there were lots of community groups out there for example the Committee had engaged with the Youth Advisory Board when progressing with the accessible play equipment at The Walks. She added that she did not want to wait in progressing the Committee to an Area Committee.

Councillor Colwell outlined his ideas in relation to engagement with community groups and having engagement events before becoming an executive committee.

The Chair asked the Committee to consider whether it should carry out engagement events before it became an Area Committee.

The Monitoring Officer explained that any formal consultation would have to run through Communications and there was currently no provision for that and it would delay the process.

Councillor Jones added that he supported an Area Committee, which was something that had been asked for a long time. He urged the Committee not to slow the process down as the sooner it became a decision-making body, the sooner changes could be made for the communities that Members represented. He would the Committee to be established as a decision-making body first and then the Terms of Reference could include engagement with the community rather than wait and hold the process up. He outlined his idea in relation to funding.

The Chair added that it had been pointed out that Councillors all had their community grants and further consideration needed to be given to funding.

Councillor Joyce made reference to Downham Market having the same issue with Special Expenses. He suggested that in relation to the issue of community engagement, a surgery for residents could be held once a week with maybe two Councillors in attendance, resulting in direct engagement with the community.

The Chair added that it was important that Councillors went out to the community rather than expecting them to come to Councillors. She stated that she found an 'out and about' event with Freebridge Community Housing really useful. She felt that everyone agreed that community engagement was important.

Councillor Kemp added that community engagement was important needed to be reinforced and outlined various ways that this could happen.

Councillor Colwell added that he was aware that certain wards had easier access to community groups and therefore able to apply for funding. That was one of reasons why he was looking forward to the creation of an Area Committee and would not want the creation of it to be held up in any way.

Councillor Parish added that he was pleased that the Committee was enthusiastic about the creation of an Area Committee. He hoped that once the Area Committee was established it would better the lives of people living in King's Lynn.

In summary the Committee:

AGREED:

- (1) That the Committee supports the creation of an Area Committee.
- (2) That Terms of Reference for an Area Committee be drafted and presented to a future meeting.
- (3) That the frequency of meetings be considered further.
- (4) That further consideration be given to the name of the Committee.
- (5) That a suitable budget be identified for the Committee.

7 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillor Mrs Collop asked if the start time of the meetings could be brought forward as she used public transport and struggled to get to the meeting for 6pm.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that future meetings would commence at 5.15 pm.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on **Monday 29 January 2024** at **5.15 pm** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn**.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm