

MEMBER MAJOR PROJECTS BOARD REPORT

REPORT TO:	Member Major Projects Board		
DATE:	11 th November 2024		
TITLE:	Town Deal : Riverfront Regeneration – Review - Consultations		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Review/Monitoring		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Cabinet Sub-Committee [Cross Party]		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Matthew Henry [Assistant Director Property & Projects] Abigail Rawlings [Project Officer]		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:

The Member Major Projects Board (MMPB) has been set up as a sub-committee of the Council’s Cabinet to have a monitoring and oversight role for the Council’s Major Projects. The Council’s Major Projects represent a significant proportion of the Council’s Capital Programme both in the number of projects and the level of capital expenditure.

The MMPB members have raised questions about the development and evolution of the Town Deal funded Riverfront Regeneration project, particularly with regard to the level, and degree, of consultation – with specific mention of the Planning Department and the Planning Department’s Conservation Officer.

This report sets out the various consultations undertaken during the development of this project through the RIBA [Royal Institution of British Architects] Stages – up to this point in time (end of October 2024).

KEY ISSUES:

MMPB [and the Council’s Cabinet] is :

- keen to ensure that projects are managed and developed in the best possible way;
- that relevant stakeholders, internal and external, are engaged with throughout the project process;
- that projects are managed and developed in a transparent way;
- that projects fit well with the Council’s overarching strategic objectives; and
- that best value is achieved in delivering projects

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

Not applicable : this is a “review & monitoring” report. MMPB members, following consideration of this report, may wish to direct Officers to consider alternative options to the way that project consultation and engagement processes are undertaken for future Major (and other) projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That MMPB members consider the content of this report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The MMPB is keen that the Council continually reviews its project delivery methodology and seeks to identify potential improvements. This will help to ensure that ultimately projects will be delivered in the most efficient and effective way, and fully taking into account the views and opinions of relevant stakeholders.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Member Major Projects Board (MMPB) members have raised questions about the consultation and engagement process undertaken by Project Managers in the development of council run projects. Specifically, queries have been raised about the development and evolution of the Town Deal funded Riverfront Regeneration project, particularly with regard to the level, and degree, of consultation with the Council's Planning Department and the Planning Department's Conservation Officer, as the project has evolved.
- 1.2 This report sets out the various consultations undertaken during the development of the Riverfront Regeneration project through the RIBA [Royal Institution of British Architects] Stages – up to this point in time (end of October 2024). As at the date of this report the project was considered to be at the end of RIBA Stage 3. [Note : there is some information on the RIBA stages set out later within this report].

2.0 Background

- 2.1 During 2021 the Council secured in principle funding through the Town Deal programme on the basis of a number of potential projects, one of which related to the riverfront (River Great Ouse) in King's Lynn. The originally proposed project involved physical infrastructure (moorings, electric and sewer connections) at Purfleet Quay to facilitate the mooring of a vessel to operate as a "floating restaurant" plus a significant "hard" tidal defence structure at Boal Quay that would potentially facilitate the development of this area with high density housing. These proposals were reviewed and subsequently considered unviable, mainly owing to :
- the proposed reduction of housing unit numbers in the Local Plan allocation for the Boal Quay site; and
 - the opportunity to site a floating restaurant had been marketed for a number of years with little interest being received from operators.
- 2.2 In late 2021 the Council's Executive Director (Environment & Planning) was allocated the role of Project Sponsor and the Assistant Director (Property & Projects) was allocated the role of Project Manager and were tasked with coming up with ideas for the riverfront area in King's Lynn. This was a significant challenge as well-formed, and costed, Business Cases for the projects needed to be submitted to the Council's Cabinet and the newly formed Town Deal Board in September 2022 for approval.
- 2.3 Initial, informal, discussions with Cabinet Members and Town Deal Board Members identified that there was support to generally enliven the riverfront area in some way and that the project should tie-in with existing riverfront events such as the Hanse Festival and the water-skiing championship. In addition, the Custom House, which had stood empty for some time, at Purfleet was also identified as being something that should be focussed on as part of the idea development process.

2.4 During the development of the Project Brief the Assistant Director (Property & Projects) identified a number of key risk issues in seeking to deliver a project (or projects) in this area of King's Lynn, particularly within a tight timescale, and these are set out below :

- the Custom House is a Grade 1 Listed Building;
- the Custom House is leased by the borough council from a private individual;
- the riverfront area is covered by two separate Conservation Areas;
- there is a significant concentration of Listed Buildings along, and near to, the riverfront area;
- noting King's Lynn's significant history and heritage – there could be issues with archaeological finds;
- the south quay maintains an adopted highway operated by Norfolk County Council as local highway authority;
- the south quay retains a significant number of Pay & Display car parking spaces owned by Norfolk County Council;
- the quay head itself is owned and operated by the King's Lynn Conservancy Board;
- the area is adjacent to a tidal river (the River Great Ouse) therefore flood risk issues would need to be considered;
- the Environment Agency own and maintain significantly important flood defences along certain sections of the riverfront; and
- certain other structures and buildings along the riverfront are privately owned and form part of the coastal defences for King's Lynn, including the Custom House.

Noting the above, the statutory bodies [Historic England, the Environment Agency, the Local Highway Authority, and the King's Lynn Conservancy Board] were all consulted during the early RIBA Stages so as to help shape the ideas and proposals to be presented to the Borough Council and the Town Deal Board. The team was very conscious of timescales and therefore project proposals that were "broadly acceptable" needed to be identified quickly.

2.5 Noting the potential complexity and the requirement to deal with a number of statutory bodies an internal Project Team was assembled and an external Project Management service was employed [Greyfriars Project Management]. The project team comprised:

- Executive Director (Environment & Planning) – as Project Sponsor
- Assistant Director (Property & Projects) – as client-side Project Manager
- Assistant Director (Regeneration, Housing & Place)
- Regeneration Programmes Manager
- Regeneration Project Officer
- Corporate Projects Programme Manager
- Senior Corporate Governance & Risk Officer
- Graduate Planning Control Officer
- Principal Consultant – Economics [Mott MacDonald*]
- Principal Consultant [Mott MacDonald*]

- Project Manager [Greyfriars Project Management]
- Project Administrator [Greyfriars Project Management]

Note : Mott MacDonald* were commissioned for all of the Town Deal projects to write the Business Cases.

- 2.6 It is important to note that the Council's Conservation Officer was not included within the Project Team, and nor was a Planning Officer, as it was considered that there could be a conflict of interest in their being part of the team that would submit planning applications and Planning, Listed Building & Conservation Area applications during the course of the project. That said, the Project Sponsor was a qualified Town Planner, and a Graduate Planning Control Officer was also part of the team.
- 2.7 The initial Project Team, as set out within 2.5 above, took the project through RIBA Stage 0 (zero) through to mid-way in RIBA Stage 2 (approximately), with the initial Concept Design and Business Case being approved by the Council's Cabinet and the Town Deal Board in September/October 2022. Thereafter a more formal Town Deal Project Board was set up, and a professional Architect led Design & Delivery team was commissioned via competitive tendering (within a Framework Contract). Note that the Tender Specification stated that a specialist Conservation Architect formed part of the professional project team. Graeme Massie Architects* were subsequently appointed following Tender Submissions.

*Note that Graeme Massie Architects had previously been appointed by the Council's Regeneration team to undertake various pieces of work in King's Lynn, including the King's Lynn Public Realm Action Plan (KLPRAP) during 2020/21. The KLPRAP included a significant amount of work relating to King's Lynn's history and heritage together with the town's interesting historically evolved architectural offering, which helped shape the recommendations within the Action Plan.

- 2.8 During the lead up to the appointment of the Architect led team, the Council commissioned a "Statement of Significance" report for the Custom House and its setting. It was recognised that special consideration would be needed for any works and/or adaptations to this significantly Listed Building (Grade 1). Player Roberts Bell (Conservation Architects) were appointed to produce the "Statement of Significance" report, and as part of the process engaged extensively with the Council's Conservation Officer during its creation.
- 2.8 The Professional Project Team has subsequently developed the project from mid RIBA Stage 2 and has taken the project to the end of RIBA Stage 3. This is where the project currently stands.
- 2.9 For information the RIBA Stages are set out below in summary form, please note these have been set out in very broad terms:

<p>Stage 0: Strategic Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary ideas • Define Project Scope • Design issues • Desired project outcome 	<p>Stage 3: Spatial Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolve Concept Design • Structural Design • Services • Cost assessment • Design & Access Statement • Statement of Significance/Heritage Statement • Planning Application
<p>Stage 1: Preparation and Briefing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Project Brief • Feasibility • Surveys • Initial Risk Assessment 	<p>Stage 4: Technical Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed drawings • Schedule of works • Specifications • Building Regulations submission • Tender (or award) contract
<p>Stage 2: Concept Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First main design stage • Final Project Brief • Initial structural design & specification • Pre-App planning advice 	<p>Stage 5: Construction</p> <p>Stage 6: Handover</p> <p>Stage 7: Use</p>

3.0 Project Management, Project Governance & significant changes

- 3.1 During 2021-2022 fortnightly meetings were held with the initial Project Team that was assembled to deliver the Design Concept and Business Case by September 2022. Meetings every two weeks were necessary owing to the tight timescales involved.
- 3.2 The original Project Sponsor [Executive Director (Environment & Planning)] was replaced as Project Sponsor by the Assistant Director (Property & Projects) following Concept and Business Case approval by the Council's Cabinet and the Town Deal Board in September/October 2022.
- 3.3 Greyfriars Project Management contract ended on 31.10.22.
- 3.4 External Consultant appointed as Project Lead/Manager from 09.01.23.
- 3.5 External Consultant contract as Project Lead/Manager ceased in May/June 2024 and project management responsibility transferred to a Project Officer within the Corporate Project Delivery team.
- 3.6 A more formal Town Deal Project Board was established and Chaired by the Assistant Director (Property & Projects) and sat/sits monthly.
- 3.7 Graeme Massie Architects (and delivery team) appointed May 2023. The first meeting of the new professional project team was held on 12th June 2023.

3.8 Change of Political Administration for the Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk in May 2023. Briefings required to familiarise new councillors and new Cabinet Members and Cabinet Portfolio Holders

3.9 With effect from 21.10.24 the Assistant Director (Property & Projects) is no longer Project Sponsor and is no longer involved with the Riverfront Regeneration project. This role has now transferred to the Assistant Director (Regeneration, Housing & Place).

4.0 Engagement & Consultation

4.1 Set out below is a schedule of the various consultations, engagement events and meetings with the relevant stakeholders in respect of the Town Deal Riverfront Regeneration project. The schedule does not include every project team meeting or Project Board meeting, nor various other meetings relating to the project. The schedule below has sought to identify the area of potential concern identified by the MMPB in respect of perceived limited engagement with the Planning and Conservation teams within the Council.

4.2 It is important to note that the Borough Council was without a Conservation Officer between October 2022 to March 2023. The post was vacant between these dates.

4.3 Please note schedule below :

2022	What	Who	Notes
01.04.22	Riverfront Workshop event at the Town Hall [to develop ideas & concepts]	Town Deal Board ‘champion’	Private sector business representative
		KL BID Manager	Member of Working Group, TDB member, champion for Public Realm TD project
		Town Deal Board Member	Private sector business representative Member of Public Realm Action Group
		KL Civic Society	Member of Public Realm Action Group
		Elected member, BCKLWN	Deputy Leader / member of TDB
		Elected member, BCKLWN	Lead BCKLWN member
		Executive Director (Environment & Planning), BCKLWN	Project Sponsor/Planning
		Planner, BCKLWN	Planning
		Assistant Director Property & Projects, BCKLWN	Project Manager
		Principal Project Surveyor,	Knowledge of Custom

		BCKLWN	House, links with Norfolk Museums service and Guildhall project
		Consultant working on Guildhall & Creative Hub project	Links with Guildhall & Creative Hub project
		BCKLWN Regeneration & Development panel member and Cllr	Provide R&D panel input
		BCKLWN Regeneration & Development panel member and Cllr	Provide R&D panel input
		Greyfriars Project Management	Facilitator for the session, working on client side of Riverfront project
		Greyfriars Project Management	Working on client side of Riverfront project
		BCKLWN Officer	BCKLWN Town Deal support
29.06.22	meeting	Environmental Agency	Flood Risk
07.06.22	meeting	Assistant Director Operations & Commercial	update on plans for Riverfront and to gain their views
22.06.22	meeting	Norfolk County Council	Highways Authority – highway issues/implications
28.06.22	meeting	Architect and Conservation Officer	Custom House
04.07.22	meeting	Assistant Director Operations & Commercial	initial concepts for Riverfront
07.07.22	meeting	Cabinet Briefing	initial concepts for Riverfront
11.07.22	meeting	Harbour Master King's Lynn Conservancy Board	initial concepts for Riverfront issues/implications
12.07.22	meeting	Historic England Architect and Conservation Officer, BCKLWN Officers.	initial concepts for Riverfront & Custom House
21.07.22	meeting	Regeneration and Development Panel	initial concepts for Riverfront & Custom House
27.07.22	meeting	Historic England Conservation team	further opportunity to discuss Architect proposals for Custom House and Public Realm
25.08.22	Public Consultation (local invitees)	Local Residents & Local Businesses	Resident and local business engagement event at Custom House facilitated by Greyfriars. Attended by approx. 80 people.
22.09.22	meeting	Regeneration and Development Panel	Design Concepts & Business Case

26.09.22	meeting	Special Cabinet	Design Concepts & Business Case approval
02.10.22	Public Consultation	Heritage Open Days	public exhibition held in Custom House
2023	What	Who	Notes
15.03.23	Workshop - Town Hall	CLLrs, Civic Soc, Cultural Officer, TBD members	Design Concepts
19.05.23	meeting	Conservation Officer	reviewed and comment on the draft Statement of Significance for Custom House
25.05.23	meeting	Project Lead Conservation Officer Player Roberts Bell architects	review Custom House Statement of Significance document
02.06.23	Site Visits	Assistant Director Property and Projects Cabinet Portfolio Holders (x 2)	Tour of Riverfront sites and familiarisation for new Cabinet Members
11.07.23	meeting	Project Team, Cultural Officer Assistant Director Regeneration & Place	internal meeting with officers
09.08.23	meeting	Owner of Custom House	Discuss concepts and ideas
05.10.23	meeting	Conservation Officer Architect Heritage consultant	
25.10.23	meeting	Conservation Officer Architect Heritage consultant Principle Project Surveyor Project Lead	Consultation
27.10.23	Site meeting	Design team Environment Agency	flood defences at Devil's Alley and Custom House
30.10.23	meeting	Town Deal Board	Riverfront Update
13.11.23	meeting	Owner of Custom House Project Manager Project Lead	Design review
22.11.23	meeting	Public Open Space Team Assistant Director Operations & Commercial Project Manager	Devil's Alley planting scheme review
24.11.24	meeting	Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Officer Project Manager	Devil's Alley archaeology implications.
05.12.23	site visit	Public Open Space Team Assistant Director Operations &	Devil's Alley

		Commercial Project Manager	
11.12.23	Pre-App Meeting	Conservation Officer Planning Officer Architect Project Manager	Custom House
19.12.23	meeting	Project Manager Property Services	to discuss a resident's garage and car parking at Devil's Alley
2024	What	Who	Notes
09.01.24	meeting	Assistant Director Property and Projects Project Manager Owner Custom House	Update
23.01.24	Site meeting	Project Manager Conservation Officer Historic England	Custom House, then Devil's Alley to discuss the plans
30.01.24	meeting	Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Officer Project Manager	to discuss Devil's Alley
30.01.24	meeting	Project Manager Project Sponsor Executive Director (Environment & Planning) Assistant Director Planning Conservation Officer	to discuss Customs House
01.02.24	Public Consultation	Project Team Conservation Officer	
12.02.24	Consultation & Site Visit	Historic England (x 3) Project Team Conservation Officer	
13.02.24	meeting	Norfolk Museums Service Project Manager	
29.02.24	Resident Engagement session (Custom House)	Project Manager Assistant Director Property & Projects (Sponsor) Local residents	Temporary closure of Devil's Alley
13.03.24	meeting	Conservation Officer Planning Officer Project Manager	Pre-meet before site visit from representative from SPAB [Society for the Protection of Ancient Building]
15.03.24	Site meeting	Conservation Officer Planning Officer Project Manager Assistant Director Property & Projects Principal Projects Surveyor Project Officer	Initial viewing of site by SPAB representative
20.03.24	meeting	Conservation Officer	Devil's Alley Pre-App

		Planning Officer Project Manager	Feedback
09.04.24	meeting	Planning and Highways Team	Devil's Alley
16.04.24	Workshop	We Are Placemaking Various Stakeholders	Potential uses and events at Riverfront & Custom House
23.04.24	Site meeting	Conservation Officer Planning Officer Assistant Director Planning Assistant Director Property & Projects Project Manager Town Deal Board members (x 3)	Custom House
18.05.24		Historic England	Pre-App advice (Custom House)
05.06.24	Site meeting	Conservation Officer Ecologist Project Manager	Dry-side
07.06.24	meeting	Conservation Officer Planning Officer Architect Project Manager	Devil's Alley
07.06.24	meeting	Historic England	Custom House
14.06.24	meeting	Planning Team Ecologist	Devil's Alley Biodiversity Net Gain
21.06.24	meeting	Conservation Officer Planning Officer Project Manager	Devil's Alley Review
26.06.24	meeting	CSNN Waste Team Public Open Space Designing out Crime Officer Waste Manager ASB Officer Senior Community Safety & Neighbourhood Nuisance Officer Assistant Director Planning Assistant Director Property & Projects Project Manager	Devil's Alley review
28.06.24	meeting	Conservation Officer Project Officer	Dry-side Window discussion
08.07.24	meeting	Assistant Director Operations & Commercial	Dry-side specification
10.07.24	meeting	Conservation Area Advisory Panel Conservation Officer	Riverfront proposals
22.07.24	meeting	Historic England Conservation Officer	Extended Pre-Application meeting
22.08.24	meeting	Conservation Officer	Dry-side discussion
30.08.24	meeting	Conservation Officer Principal Projects Manager Planning Officer Project Officer	Internal discussion on the Devil's Alley application

		Planning Control Manager, Principal Planner	
13.09.24		Historic England	Extended Pre-Application Advice letter received
17.09.24	meeting	Conservation Panel Conservation Officer Planning Officer Principal Planning Officer Architect Planning Control Manager	Devil's Alley
25.09.24	meeting	Conservation Officer Historic England	Custom House discussion
25.10.24	meeting	Town Deal Board	Riverfront update meeting RIBA Stage 3 report & presentation

4.4 Please note that the above schedule does not include the statutory consultations (and public engagement) as part of the formal planning application processes. Please also note that separate Planning (and/or Planning Listed Building & Conservation Area) Applications have, or will be submitted for :

- Dry-side facilities (part of former Sommerfeld & Thomas warehouse site)
- Devil's Alley Public Realm and Events Space
- Custom House adaptations
- Purfleet Public Realm areas.

5.0 MMPB Considerations

5.1 The MMPB members are invited to consider the content of this report and to assess whether, or not, sufficient, or appropriate, consultation and engagement with the relevant stakeholders was undertaken by the Project Team.

5.2 The MMPB members are invited to either :

- make specific recommendations, or
- request that Officers review existing consultation approaches and methodologies (see note below)

Note : the Borough Council has already commenced a series of training sessions in respect of stakeholder consultations that are being delivered by the Council's new Communications & Engagement Manager.

5.3 The recommendations, and suggestions made by the MMPB Members will be reported back to the Officer Major Projects Board (OMPB) for consideration and discussion. The Executive Director (Place) as Chair of the OMPB will report back to the MMPB in the near future.

Matthew Henry MRICS
Assistant Director Property & Projects
1st November 2024