

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

COUNCIL

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 2nd July, 2026
at 5.00 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn**

PRESENT: Councillor S Bearshaw (Chair)

Councillors B Anota, B Ayres, A Beales, P Bland, R Blunt, A Bubb, A Bullen, R Coates, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop, R Colwell, C J Crofts, M de Whalley, A Dickinson, S Everett, J Fry, D Heneghan, P Hodson, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Long, J Lowe, A Moore, C Morley, S Nash, J Osborne, T Parish, J Ratcliffe, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, S Sandell, D Sayers, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey and A Ware

C:13 PRAYERS

Prayers were led by Father Adrian Ling.

C:14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhondi, Humphrey, Kirk, Lintern, Moriarty, Ring, Tyler and de Winton.

C:15 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes from the meetings held on 26th March and 14th May 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

C:16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C:17 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The Mayor read a letter received from the Mayor of Gallipoli, congratulating him on his appointment. The letter highlighted the longstanding relationship between King's Lynn and Gallipoli, emphasised the importance of maintaining and strengthening these ties, and extended an invitation for the Mayor to visit Gallipoli.

C:18 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

C:19

PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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The Mayor invited Cliff Goodman to ask a question as follows:

“The current declaration appears to commit to reducing CO2 emissions as well as other initiatives aimed at playing a part in tackling climate and nature emergency issues locally.

A film featuring excerpts from these briefings was recently screened at the Majestic Cinema and the Corn Exchange. and is currently being screened nationwide. The message from the briefings is clear and stark. Science backed evidence overwhelmingly shows that rising temperatures resulting in some of the medical emergencies, deaths, infrastructure damage and travel delays is significantly influenced by human activity. The warning messages state that it's not certain doom, it's still not too late to stop temperature rise spiralling out of control but it's vital this council ensures meaningful actions to feed into combined efforts to tackle climate and nature crisis. It's important that this council's actions take account of fairness and do not put additional financial burden on people, especially those who can least afford extra living costs.

My question is:

How does the current Climate Emergency Declaration and associated strategy take account of reporting measured progress on delivering objectives, including reducing CO2? Do the strategies include aims to get overall medium to long term cost saving or at least not incur heavy extra spending?”

Councillor de Whalley responded by explaining that, in accordance with the Council's Climate Change Policy and Strategy, the target date for eliminating the Council's own carbon emissions was 2035, with a commitment to explore opportunities to bring this date forward if possible.

He advised that the Council produced and published annual reports on its Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. In considering decarbonisation measures, the Council sought to implement cost effective carbon reduction initiatives, whilst also prioritising energy conservation measures that provide protection against future energy price increases. Where appropriate, the Council also pursued external grant funding to support the delivery of decarbonisation projects.

Councillor de Whalley noted that the procurement of zero carbon electricity had led to significant reduction of carbon emissions, whilst resulting in only a modest increase in costs. He further explained that the Council had worked in partnership with other organisations on the installation and operation of electric vehicle charging points which had

increased the availability of electric vehicle charging facilities across the Borough and supported the Council's vehicle fleet.

He added that the Council continued to maximise the return on investment from low carbon initiatives including through the Climate Change Levy relief associated with combined heat and power units, and smart export guarantee payments received for surplus energy generation.

Councillor de Whalley referred to section 5 of the Climate Change Strategy and Action plan, which provided further detail on the range of climate related work currently being undertaken by the Council.

By way of a supplementary question, Cliff Goodman asked what plans were in place to increase green spaces to help mitigate the effects of extreme heat. In response, Councillor de Whalley explained that the Local Plan process was ongoing and would include the development of a Green Infrastructure Plan.

C:20 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

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The Leader, seconded by Councillor rust proposed the following recommendations:

- CAB150: Audit Committee Annual Report from the Chair.
- CAB11: Health and Safety Policy and Statement of Intent.

RESOLVED: The recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 23 April 2026 and 9 June 2026 were approved by Full Council, as set out below.

CAB150: Audit Committee Annual Report from the Chair

1. That the Annual Report from the Chair of the Audit Committee be considered and noted by Full Council

CAB11: Health and Safety Policy and Statement of Intent

1. To approve the adoption of the Health, Safety & Welfare Policy.
2. To delegate responsibility for approving annual administrative reviews to the Chief of Staff.
3. To note that where significant changes to the policy are made that these will be brought back to council for approval.

C:21 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

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Councillor Beales, seconded by Councillor Rust proposed the recommendations as set out within the report and the sheet which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Council noted that, where the number of nominations exceeded the number of available positions, a ballot would be conducted. The results of the ballot are attached to these minutes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council appoints representatives to serve on the Outside Bodies and partnerships listed in the report.
2. That Council approves the appointment of representatives nominated by the Panels to serve on Outside Bodies and Partnerships which fall within the Scrutiny and Regulatory categories as set out in the report.
3. That Council approve the representatives to serve on the Executive Outside Bodies and partnerships as set out in the report.

A copy of the appointments are attached to these minutes.

C:22

NOTICES OF MOTION

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Councillor Moore proposed the below Notice of Motion:

Replace the Climate Emergency Declaration with a Practical Environmental and Resilience Strategy.

This Council notes that the Climate Emergency declared in 2021 has not delivered clear or practical outcomes for residents. The UK produces approximately 1% of global CO₂ emissions, and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk contribute a tiny fraction of that total. Reducing our limited share alone will not meaningfully alter global climate trends, but the costs of rapid transition policies are already placing significant strain on local households.

Many of the most vulnerable residents are facing rising energy bills, fuel poverty, and financial hardship linked to policies that increase the cost of heating, transport, and daily living. No local environmental strategy should make life harder for those already struggling or force people into choosing between heating and eating.

This Council believes that practical environmental action should focus on improving local resilience and protecting our area from real risks such as flooding, coastal erosion, drainage pressures, water scarcity, and loss of agricultural land and wildlife habitats. The planning system considers environmental issues on a case by case basis, but there is

no dedicated local process that assesses the wider environmental pressures created by long term population growth, including increased demand for land, housing, energy, water, and infrastructure.

This Council resolves to:

1. End the 2021 Climate Emergency declaration.
2. Replace it with a Practical Environmental and Resilience Strategy focused on flood defence, water management, land protection, and locally beneficial environmental measures.
3. Ensure future policies protect vulnerable residents from increased living costs.
4. Provide annual updates on measurable local resilience improvements rather than symbolic targets.

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Hodson, who reserved his right to speak.

The Leader of the Council welcomed debate on the motion but stated that he did not support it and urged Members to reject it. He noted the irony that the meeting had been deferred by one week due to extreme heat. He referred to this year having recorded the hottest June since records began and observed that the ten hottest years on record had all occurred since 1990. Drawing on his experience in farming and harvesting, he outlined the impact that climate change was having on the agricultural sector. He also referred to the heatwave of 1976, commenting that temperatures of that nature were now becoming increasingly commonplace. The Leader further highlighted increases in rainfall, warmer and wetter winters, and changing weather patterns, which he stated were consistent with the predictions made by climate scientists.

The Leader also referred to the action being taken by the Council, including the provision of grants, support for energy-efficient housing and other assistance available to residents. In addition, he highlighted the roles of the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as the lead agencies in relation to flooding matters.

Councillor Beales expressed disappointment with the motion. He suggested that, if Councillor Moore's concern related to Council expenditure, the motion should be withdrawn and the issue of Council spending referred to a scrutiny panel for further consideration.

Councillor de Whalley spoke against the motion, commenting that many households were facing financial pressures and that the Council had delivered clear and measurable benefits for residents through externally funded projects and investment.

He outlined the cost of the Council's climate change mitigation work, stating that it amounted to approximately £3.38 per household per annum. He also referred to the Council Tax Relief Scheme, which provided support to the Borough's most vulnerable residents.

Councillor de Whalley highlighted the work undertaken by the Internal Drainage Boards and referred to the ongoing Local Plan process. He commented that the Notice of Motion would make it more difficult for residents to access assistance and maintained that the cost of addressing climate change did not represent a significant financial burden, particularly when compared with the continuing costs associated with Brexit.

Councillor de Whalley also referred to the record temperatures experienced in June and the impact on elderly and vulnerable residents. He stated that the climate emergency was a genuine issue and that the Council was working towards science-based targets. He urged Members to reject the motion.

Councillor Sayers spoke against the motion and stated that the assertions contained within the Notice of Motion were incorrect. He objected to claims that the Council's response to the Climate Change Emergency had failed to deliver benefits and referred to increases in energy and gas prices and argued that the Council's investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures had helped to protect residents from rising costs. He concluded by stating that he did not support the motion.

Councillor Kunes referred to international agreements entered into by a number of countries to address climate change and noted that the United States had subsequently withdrawn from one such agreement. He also made comments regarding the relationship between the President of the United States and Nigel Farage. Councillor Kunes referred to scientific evidence concerning the impact of burning fossil fuels and stated that action was needed to protect the environment for future generations. He described the motion as a political gesture by Reform and urged Members to reject it.

Councillor Kemp spoke against the Notice of Motion, stating that climate change was a global emergency and that everyone had a responsibility to play their part in addressing it. She referred to rising sea levels and increasing temperatures and argued that, while there was still an opportunity to mitigate the effects of climate change, action was required now. Councillor Kemp referred to the 1987 international agreement to address the hole in the ozone layer and noted that the resulting global action had contributed to its recovery.

She emphasised the importance of all countries and regions playing their part in tackling environmental challenges.

Councillor Kemp stated that the Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency had delivered benefits for residents through the promotion of energy-efficient housing developments incorporating measures such as solar panels, insulation, and air and ground source heat pumps. She also referred to the growth in the use of electric vehicles and the Council's support for this through the installation of electric vehicle charging points, which had contributed to improved air quality.

In addition, she highlighted the importance of protecting green spaces and referred to initiatives including the Million Trees Project and Harding's Pits. Councillor Kemp stated that the Council was improving the lives of residents and that local action was an important contribution to wider global efforts.

Councillor Osborne addressed the Council and stated that the Notice of Motion failed to acknowledge the risks posed by climate change. He stated that the impacts of climate change would continue to worsen unless action was taken to reduce emissions and protect residents. He referred to invest-to-save schemes and other work undertaken by the Council and highlighted the number of excess deaths associated with periods of extreme heat.

Councillor Osborne stated that the area had a responsibility to play its part in addressing climate change, both for local residents and the wider global community. He also referred to comments made by Councillor Beales regarding the impact of climate change on farming and agriculture, noting the significance of the sector to the local economy.

Councillor Osborne further referred to the increasing use of renewable energy and advances in battery technology.

He concluded that withdrawing from the Climate Change Emergency declaration would amount to ignoring an issue that could not be avoided and confirmed that he would vote against the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Rust referred to the support provided to the Borough's most vulnerable residents and the positive impact this assistance had on partner organisations, including the NHS. She referred to the Marmot Principles and the contribution they could make to improving residents' quality of life. Councillor Rust also highlighted a range of support initiatives available within the Borough, including Food for Thought, Five Dinners, the Beat Your Bills Roadshow, Care and Repair, and partnership working with other agencies.

Councillor Long referred to his previous role as Portfolio Holder for Environment and stated that work to support residents had been carried out prior to the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency. He outlined concerns raised by some residents regarding the ECO3 Scheme and sought assurance that public funds were being spent

effectively. He also noted that initiatives relating to solar energy and photovoltaic technology had been pursued prior to the Climate Change Emergency declaration. Councillor Long referred to long-standing efforts to reduce emissions and noted that building regulations already required energy-efficient development. He stated that he would welcome the introduction of further practical measures and strategies.

Councillor Joyce agreed that there should be practical measures in place along with a resilience strategy in place to address climate change. He commented that mixed messages had been received regarding whether the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency had resulted in additional external funding.

Councillor Joyce also referred to reduced returns on some developments as a consequence of net zero requirements, while acknowledging that development also created employment opportunities.

He confirmed that he would vote against the motion.

Councillor Parish commented that climate change had progressed beyond being an emergency and was becoming a disaster. He stated that there was a moral responsibility to reduce environmental harm and welcomed practical measures aimed at improving resilience. However, he noted that the Council was not the lead authority for certain matters, including flooding.

Councillor Ratcliffe referred to the importance of partnership working with lead agencies on issues such as flooding and transport. She stated that the Notice of Motion appeared to oversimplify the range of partnerships, policies and strategies currently in place and commented that it did not provide sufficient detail as to how its objectives would be achieved.

Councillor Squire stated that the reality of climate change was supported by scientific evidence and could not be ignored. She commented that councillors, as community leaders, had a moral responsibility to help ensure a sustainable future for future generations.

Councillor Squire referred to the impact of rising energy costs on residents and the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. She highlighted the benefits of cleaner air and lower emissions and expressed concern that the Notice of Motion failed to recognise the work being undertaken by officers and councillors to support residents. She also referred to the Council's work with a range of partner organisations to protect local communities and concluded by stating that, in her view, the Notice of Motion was politically motivated.

Councillor Hodson, as seconder of the motion, addressed the Council and stated that the proposal sought to promote a sensible approach to decision-making and the allocation of resources. He emphasised that

the motion did not propose the removal of all existing policies and measures, but instead called for a more practical approach.

In summing up, Councillor Moore, as proposer of the motion, thanked Members for their contributions. He advised that he had submitted the motion to the Leader of the Council in advance for comment but had not received any feedback. Councillor Moore also referred to the 250-word limit applicable to Notices of Motion, which he stated had limited the amount of detail he was able to include.

Councillor Moore commented that the motion supported the principle of resilience and argued that further work should be undertaken to strengthen this. He stated that it was important to protect the environment and act in the best interests of residents, whilst recognising the need to manage finite resources and budgets. He explained that the purpose of the motion was to ensure that resources were used effectively and delivered the greatest possible benefit for the residents of West Norfolk. He concluded by urging Members to support the motion.

Councillor Colwell proposed a recorded vote on the Motion and this was supported by the requisite amount of Members.

The results of the recorded vote are below.

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
Anota		✓	
Ayres		✓	
Beales		✓	
Bearshaw		✓	
Bland		✓	
Blunt		✓	
Bubb		✓	
Bullen		✓	
Coates			✓
Collingham		✓	
Collop		✓	
Colwell		✓	
Crofts		✓	
Dickinson		✓	
Everett		✓	
Fry	✓		
Heneghan		✓	
Hodson	✓		
Jones		✓	
Joyce		✓	
Kemp		✓	
Kunes		✓	
Lawrence		✓	
Long			✓

Lowe	✓		
Moore	✓		
Morley		✓	
Nash	✓		
Osborne		✓	
Parish		✓	
Pidcock	✓		
Ratcliffe		✓	
Rose		✓	
Rust		✓	
Ryves	✓		
Sandell		✓	
Sayers		✓	
Spikings		✓	
Squire		✓	
Storey		✓	
Ware		✓	
de Whalley		✓	
TOTAL	7	33	2

RESOLVED: The Motion was lost.

COUNCIL ADJOURNED FOR A COMFORT BREAK FROM 6.22PM TO 6.34PM

C:23

CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS

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Councillor Beales moved the Cabinet Members Reports.

Councillor Blunt congratulated the Leader on his appointment as Chair of the Norfolk Leaders Group. He also referred to the recent Voluntary Joint Committee meeting and expressed concern that no representatives from Norfolk County Council had been in attendance. Councillor Blunt asked how Members would be kept informed of progress on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the work of the Joint Committee.

In response, Councillor Beales explained that, following the Norfolk County Council elections, he had invited the newly elected County Division Members for King's Lynn and West Norfolk to a meeting at the Town Hall, which he considered to have been constructive and worthwhile. He also referred to County and Borough representation at the Royal Norfolk Show.

Councillor Beales expressed disappointment that the new administration at Norfolk County Council was not actively engaging with the LGR process, emphasising that the matter was not political in

nature but concerned effective risk management. He also provided an update on Norfolk County Council's judicial review challenge relating to the LGR proposals.

Councillor Long raised a point of order, stating that the discussion was moving away from a question and answer format. The Mayor ruled that it was important for Members to be kept informed on matters relating to LGR.

Councillor Beales provided further information on the judicial review and related legal proceedings. He noted that Norfolk County Council officers continued to provide support to the LGR process but reiterated his disappointment at the lack of engagement from the administration. He added that he hoped to arrange further engagement sessions involving Members from King's Lynn and West Norfolk and Breckland in order to keep councillors informed of progress.

Councillor Everett asked Councillor Rust about the delay in the installation of accessible play equipment in The Walks. Councillor Rust shared Councillor Everett's disappointment but explained that there was currently a lack of resources available to progress the project and that this position was unlikely to change in the short term. She also provided information on the Youth Advisory Board's 'Right to Play' campaign.

Councillor Kemp referred to proposals for single member wards within the West Norfolk area under the new unitary authority arrangements and expressed concern that this would reduce representation in the Borough's most deprived communities. Councillor Beales reminded Members that the proposals formed part of the business case previously approved by the Council and advised that Councillor Kemp could make representations to the relevant Minister if she wished.

Councillor Nash referred to the ReFit programme and its reported underperformance. Councillor de Whalley explained that the underperformance related to the scheme not achieving the specifications and outcomes originally promised by the contractor and advised that options for resolution were being explored. He also explained that reliability issues associated with the heat pumps at King's Court had resulted in system overloads. Whilst acknowledging that the project remained a work in progress, he advised that improvements had been made.

Councillor Bubb referred to wheelchair access to the Ferry and asked whether consideration had been given to relocating the landing stages to facilitate improved accessibility. Councillor de Whalley explained that decisions regarding the location of infrastructure would need to be made by the Conservancy Board and Harbour Master. However, he confirmed that work was ongoing to improve the ferry service and make it as accessible as possible.

In response to a question from Councillor Collop, Councillor Squire agreed to investigate reports that some households had not received their annual brown bin invoice but had subsequently received correspondence regarding non-payment.

Councillor Moore referred to the Refit project and underperformance and asked if costs could be recouped. Councillor de Whalley agreed to provide an update on contractor costs.

In response to a question from Councillor Kemp regarding the Ferry, Councillor de Whalley confirmed that an application for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding had been submitted and that discussions were ongoing with Norfolk County Council regarding potential financial contributions. He also advised that he intended to invite the relevant Norfolk County Council Portfolio Holder to visit the Ferry.

Councillor Sandell asked Councillor Rust whether an update on the hospital could be provided to Members. Councillor Rust advised that she had recently met with the new Managing Director and would discuss the possibility of arranging a Member briefing session.

Councillor Kemp referred to the recently published Masterplan and its implications for Hardings Way, noting that local residents were planning a protest over the weekend. She invited the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend. Councillor de Whalley advised that the Masterplan did not fall within his portfolio responsibilities but reminded Members of the work undertaken in relation to Hardings Way, including the creation of a community orchard, support provided to the Harding's Pits Association, the installation of a public art project and an application for village green status.

Councillor Long referred to Centre Point in Fairstead and, whilst acknowledging that the site was owned by Freebridge Community Housing, asked whether action could be taken to address overflowing bins. He also requested that post event clean-up operations be extended to include West Lynn. Councillor Squire agreed to raise both matters with the relevant teams.

Councillor Kunes referred to the proposed improvements to the Ferry and asked whether alternative options, including enhanced bus services, had been considered. He expressed concern about the potential costs associated with improving access to the Ferry. Councillor de Whalley explained that the anticipated costs reflected the long-term lifespan of the infrastructure, estimated at between 60 and 120 years.

Councillor Sayers requested that his thanks be conveyed to the Council's Clean-Up Team for its prompt response to recent incidents. He also asked for an update on enforcement and prosecutions. Councillor Squire advised that recruitment of additional enforcement

officers was underway and that penalty levels would be increasing. She added that the Council was promoting a zero-tolerance approach.

Councillor Crofts referred to the refurbishment of the Custom House and advised that he had been informed that the Council did not own the building. He sought assurance that the lease arrangements were secure and suitable for the long term. The Leader assured Councillor Crofts that extensive discussions had taken place with the freehold owner. He added that Councillor Ring would provide updates to Members on progress as required.

Councillor Nash asked Councillor de Whalley whether information could be provided comparing the environmental and financial impacts of the Ferry service with those of introducing additional bus services. Councillor de Whalley commented that the Ferry offered a quicker and cleaner transport option and agreed to provide a response to Councillor Nash.

C:24 **MEMBER'S QUESTION TIME**

In response to questions from Councillor Nash regarding proposed reforms to the Planning Committee process, Councillor Spikings, in her capacity as Chair of the Planning Committee, expressed disappointment with the proposed arrangements.

She advised that, under the new regime, the majority of planning applications would be determined under delegated powers by officers and that Members would no longer have the ability to call applications before the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Spikings assured Members that regular training sessions and updates would be provided to ensure Committee Members remained informed of the changes. She also advised that her intention was to undertake a trial or 'dummy run' of the new process in advance, in order to familiarise Members with the arrangements.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm