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, 30th September, 2026 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors Bland, Blunt, Bubb, Collingham, Crofts, Hodson, Osborne (Vice Chair), Parish (Chair) and Ryves

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:
Councillor Ring – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture

MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34:
Councillor Bone (remotely)

OFFICERS:
Duncan Hall – Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place
Connor Smalls – Regeneration Programmes Officer
Hannah Wood-Handy – Planning Control Manager

RD25: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Colwell.

RD26: **MINUTES**

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

RD27: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

RD28: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

RD29: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Bone was present remotely under Standing Order 34B.

RD30: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was none.

RD31: **CABINET REPORT - NATIONAL PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

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The Planning Control Manager presented the report on the National Planning Scheme of Delegation, which the Council was required to implement by 31 October 2026. The scheme would replace the existing planning scheme of delegation and call-in arrangements, and failure to implement it could leave the Council acting unlawfully and expose decisions to judicial review.

Members were advised that Schedule 1 applications would be determined by officers. Schedule 2 applications would also be delegated unless they met the statutory gateway tests for referral to the Planning Committee.

The Planning Control Manager highlighted that ward members could request that a Schedule 2 application be considered through the gateway process by submitting a pro forma within 21 days of the publication of the weekly list, or within 30 days for environmental impact assessment development. Referral required the agreement of the nominated officer and nominated member. Where agreement could not be reached, the application would be determined under delegated powers by the Assistant Director for Environment and Planning.

The Chair thanked the Planning Control Manager for the report and presentation and invited questions and comments from Members, as summarised below.

Members of the Panel expressed serious concern that the scheme would remove ward members' automatic right to call applications in to the Planning Committee and reduce opportunities for parish councils, residents and elected Members to participate directly in the planning process.

Officers clarified that ward members, parish councils and the public could continue to comment on applications and that their representations would be considered as material planning considerations.

In response to questions from Councillor Blunt, the Planning Control Manager confirmed that delegated reports would remain publicly available. Reports would identify whether an application fell within Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 and would include consultation responses, relevant policies, material considerations, proposed conditions and the reasons for the decision. The outcome of any gateway consideration would also be recorded.

Councillor Collingham raised concerns about applications for works to protected trees. The Planning Control Manager clarified that these applications would fall within Schedule 2, but that they would be triaged as delegated matters as identified in the report. However, Members could still make comments on those applications.

Councillor Bubb asked whether consultation responses would be available before the deadline for submitting a referral request. The Planning Control Manager acknowledged that some responses, particularly from the highway authority, might not be received within 21 days. Members of the Panel were advised to submit requests within the prescribed period based on the available information.

Councillor Bubb questioned what safeguards would apply to delegated decisions. The Planning Control Manager explained that decisions would continue to be made in accordance with the development plan and other material considerations. Schedule 2 applications would be subject to officer triage and appropriate sign-off before being determined under delegated powers or referred to the gateway test panel.

The Planning Control Manager confirmed that, where the nominated officer and nominated member disagreed, the scheme required the decision to default to the Assistant Director for determination under delegated powers. A suggestion that the gateway panel comprise three members could not be accommodated because its membership was prescribed by the regulations.

Councillor Osborne acknowledged Members' concerns but noted that the scheme sought to balance local representations against matters such as business activity, employment and housing delivery. Councillor Osborne considered that the proposed triage process was preferable to every Schedule 2 application being submitted to the gateway test panel.

Councillor Ryves asked whether any councils had refused to implement the scheme. The Planning Control Manager explained that implementation was a statutory requirement and that failure to adopt it would leave the Council acting unlawfully. The Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer reminded Members that the Council had responded to the national consultations before the legislation was introduced.

In response to questions from Members of the Panel, the Planning Control Manager confirmed that existing Planning Committee arrangements would continue for applications that passed the gateway test. These included public speaking, additional correspondence, presentations, Member debate and site visits.

The Chair requested an assurance that properly submitted ward member requests would be taken seriously. The Planning Control Manager confirmed that a Schedule 2 application could not be

determined under delegated powers until a valid gateway referral request had been considered.

Members of the Panel expressed significant concern that the 21-day deadline might expire before parish councils had met or consultation responses had been received. The Planning Control Manager and the Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer agreed to investigate delays in responses from internal Council consultees and identify any measures required to improve compliance with the consultation period.

The Chair referred to two Schedule 1 applications. In relation to one application, the Chair stated that, had the original officer recommendation been followed, an incorrect planning decision would have been made. He considered that referral to the Planning Committee had enabled the correct action to be taken.

In relation to the other application, which had attracted a substantial number of public representations, the Planning Control Manager confirmed that all representations would be considered, although the decision would be based on the planning issues raised rather than the number of responses received.

The Planning Control Manager advised that quarterly monitoring information would be produced showing how Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 applications had been determined.

Members of the Panel reluctantly noted the proposed National Planning Scheme of Delegation and expressed concern regarding the reduced role of elected Members and opportunities for public participation.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel recommend to Cabinet that the recommendations set out in the report be approved, subject to the comments and concerns raised by the Panel as set out below:

1. Properly submitted Ward Member requests for consideration through the gateway process be taken seriously;
2. delays in responses from internal Council consultees be investigated; and
3. quarterly monitoring information on the operation of the Scheme be provided.

RD32: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

Councillor Bubb asked why the requested Section 106 review was not included within the immediate work programme. The Planning Control Manager confirmed that the review remained on the work programme and continued to be a priority, but that its timing had been affected by

competing demands, including implementation of the National Planning Scheme of Delegation.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme and the Forward Decisions List were noted.

RD33: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel was scheduled to take place on 25th November 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

RD34: **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RD35: **EXEMPT - CABINET REPORT - SOMMERFELD & THOMAS WAREHOUSE**

The Regeneration Programmes Officer presented the report as included in the agenda and responded to questions and comments from those present.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as included in the agenda.

The meeting closed at 7.38 pm