

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on  
Wednesday, 31st August, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's  
Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:** Councillors C Sampson (Chairman),  
Miss L Bambridge, Mrs C Bower, A Bubb, Mrs S Collop, Mrs S Fraser,  
G Hipperson, J Moriarty, P Rochford, T Smith and A Tyler

**Portfolio Holders**

Councillor A Beales - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for  
Regeneration and Industrial Assets

Councillor R Blunt - Portfolio Holder for Development

Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and  
Health

**Officers:**

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director

Barry Brandford – Waste and Recycling Manager

Ray Harding – Chief Executive

Honor Howell – Assistant Director

John Hussey – Operations Manager

Nathan Johnson – Public Open Space Manager

EC25: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hopkins,  
Lawrence, Long and Mrs Mellish.

EC26: **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes from the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 were  
agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EC27: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

EC28: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC29: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Bird – EC33.

Councillor Crofts – EC33.

Councillor Pope – EC31, EC23 and EC33.

EC30: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman reported that he had received correspondence from Downham Market Town Council regarding the Public Toilets Review and would read out their correspondence during consideration of the relevant item.

EC31: **URBAN FACILITIES, ENHANCEMENT AND STREET FURNITURE**

The Chairman explained that Members of the Panel had requested that this item be added onto the Environment and Community Panel Work Programme. Councillor Bubb explained that he had asked for the item to be considered as he had concerns over the use of A Boards, which could cause a hazard to people with disabilities. He also felt that consideration should be given to the amount of public seating available in popular areas, improving signage and making maps available at car park exits.

The Panel discussed street furniture and signage and made the following suggestions:

- King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee could look at improvements in King's Lynn area.
- Sponsorship of signage maps and street furniture could be investigated.
- Dedicated and memorial seating could be used.

The Executive Director reminded the Panel that dealing with A Boards was not a Borough Council function. It was the responsibility of Norfolk County Council Highways. He explained that previously investigations had taken place on delegating this power to the Borough Council, however if the Borough Council took on the policing of A Boards, all businesses wishing to display an A Board would require planning consent. The Executive Director explained that the planning fees would be in excess of £300 per A Board. The Borough Council had therefore made the decision not to take on the controlling of A Boards due to the additional costs which would have to be paid by the Businesses wishing to display A Boards.

The Executive Director reminded those present of the Business Improvement District ballot which was due to take place later in the year. He explained that if a Business Improvement District was established, they would have a budget available to spend for the benefit of the town centre. He suggested that discussions take place between the Panel and the Business Improvement District once it was up and running, if the ballot was successful.

**RESOLVED:** (i) Urban facilities, enhancements and street furniture be added onto the Panels work programme for January 2017, so that their ideas and suggestions can then be discussed with the relevant bodies including, King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee and the Business Improvement District.

EC32: **NORFOLK WASTE PARTNERSHIP WORK STREAMS**

The Waste and Recycling Manager presented the report which provided an update on waste related issues and provided information on the current work of the Norfolk Waste Partnership, Waste and Recycling Behaviour Change Programme and waste related issues.

The Panel were provided with detail on the four work streams which the Council was investigating. Research would then be formulated into proposals, which would be brought back to the Council for consideration at the appropriate time.

The Waste and Recycling Manager referred to the Waste and Recycling Behavioural Change Programme which was being provided through Local Green Points. The Panel were reminded that the scheme had been funded through a DCLG grant of £256,000. More detail on the scheme was included within the report and attention was drawn to the cost on contamination within recycling. It was explained that the cost of reject material in the MRF was up to £200,000. The Panel was informed that some contaminates also presented a financial risk to the contract, for example the paper bales. Inspections were carried out on the bales and if they were contaminated they would not be accepted. The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that nappies in recycling was a huge problem, with approximately 300,000 being collected with recycling each year and paper bales would not be collected if they included any nappies.

The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that the Behavioural Change Programme would be promoted further during national recycling week and work would be carried out to promote good quality recycling.

The Chairman thanked the Waste and Recycling Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to questions, the Waste and Recycling Manager explained that the behavioural change programme was designed to accommodate all, from those who did not feel confident and did not recycle, to those who did recycle, but could do more.

The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that to minimise contamination the team could inspect bins routinely where householders were found to contaminate bins and if they continually

found contaminates they would replace the householders green bin with clear sacks, so that contaminants could easily be spotted.

The Chief Executive commented that the last thing the Council wanted to do was to be heavy handed, however contaminated waste was a cost to the tax payer. Focus would be on education and encouragement, but if people were irresponsible, intervention would be required.

Concerns were raised regarding the food waste caddies and the Waste and Recycling Manager explained that all new residents of the Borough should receive a food waste caddy and instructions on how to use it. He agreed to check that information was still being provided. The Assistant Director explained that all new residents also received a Welcome Pack, which provided information on waste and recycling collections. She agreed to check that the information was still provided. It was suggested that information on how to dispose of nappies correctly could be provided to hospitals and given out as part of the maternity packs.

The Waste and Recycling Manager confirmed that work would take place on the caddy liner provision and improvements and alternatives would be considered.

The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that there were alternative options available for people who could not visit one of the household recycling centres. They could use the bulky collection service, or obtain the red tags, which could be used for additional sacks of waste if required. The Waste and Recycling Manager confirmed that work would be carried out on how improvements in recycling could be achieved in areas with communal bins.

**RESOLVED:** (i) The report was noted  
(ii) Comments made by Members would be taken into consideration.  
(iii) An update be provided to the Panel in six months time.

EC33: **PUBLIC TOILETS REVIEW**

The Chairman read out correspondence from Downham Market Town Council as attached. This was noted by the officers present.

Councillor Crofts addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He commented that he would strongly support the introduction of pay to use loos. He referred to other Local Authorities who charged for the service and felt that Hunstanton was a prime area for a trial for a paid facility. He also supported handing over certain facilities to the relevant Parishes. In response to a question from Councillor Crofts, it was confirmed that the costs to install pay to use loos would include equipment, but the biggest cost would be installing a power supply.

Councillor Pope addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He felt that public toilets which were associated with a car park, or which were well used should remain and those unconnected with a specific activity or underused should be reviewed.

Councillor Bird addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He referred to the public toilets in Hunstanton and explained that they were very busy during the peak season and often people were dissatisfied by the state of the toilets. He commended the authors of the report for a full and comprehensive report. Councillor Bird suggested that Hunstanton would be an ideal location to trial pay to use loos to see if they would be successful. He suggested that an Informal Working Group be established to look at all of the public conveniences in the Borough. The Public Open Space Manager explained that it was difficult to keep the public conveniences in Hunstanton refreshed during the peak season and sometimes the cleaners got verbal abuse when trying to clean during busy periods.

The following comments were made by Members of the Panel which would be taken into consideration during the review:

- Community toilet schemes were in place in other areas. Businesses and Cafes etc. could be paid a fee to make their services available to the Public.
- An independent review of public toilets in Hunstanton was carried out in 2014 and 60% of respondents had indicated that they did not want pay to use facilities in the Town.
- The toilets in Gaywood had been closed for a number of months due to vandalism. They were not associated with a paid car park and were underused.
- The toilets in the Walks were well used and it was felt that these should be retained.
- The provision of public toilets was important for encouraging tourists into the town centre.
- Concierge services could be considered.
- Sponsorship and advertising opportunities could be investigated.
- Considering the amount of public toilets in the Borough there was a low level of vandalism. Facilities subject to vandalism had either been closed, such as Gaywood, or repaired.

The Executive Director explained that his view was that the current arrangements for provision of toilets on car parks and amenities should be retained. Other facilities should be looked at on a case by case basis and options could be considered such as closure, or transfer to the relevant Parish Council. He referred to the report which contained details of pay to use loos and referred to an article about a Council who had installed pay to use loos which would not make any profit for over one hundred years. He also explained that there was evidence available to say that they were not well used as people could be put off by paying and often people could hold the paddle gates open so that people did not have to pay. Paid facilities would also have to be

staffed and money removed on a regular basis to prevent theft and vandalism.

The Chief Executive felt that comments made by the Panel would serve useful during the review of the public toilets. He acknowledged that the Council did not want to close anything, but expenditure had to be reduced. It was important that a good core of quality public conveniences be retained at points of arrival and those facilities that were well used. The Chief Executive felt that consideration should be given to Special Expenses and each public convenience should be looked at on a case by case basis, including input from the King's Lynn Area Advisory Committee, the relevant Parish Councils and the relevant Ward Member. The Chief Executive explained that one way to look at the situation was as if you were starting from scratch where would you feel that public conveniences were necessary.

The Chairman proposed that an Informal Working Group be established to look at the public toilets review. After being put to the vote it was agreed that an Informal Working Group be established. The Executive Director suggested that the Informal Working Group meet two to three times and report back to the Environment and Community Panel at their meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

**RESOLVED:** (i) The current arrangements for provision of toilets on car parks and amenities be retained.

(ii) The comments made by the Panel would be taken into consideration during the review.

(iii) An Informal Working Group be established by the Panel to conduct a review of public conveniences and report back on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016.

(iv) The Terms of Reference for the Informal Working Group was agreed as follows: "To review the provision of public toilets in the Borough and consider future options."

(v) The Informal Working Group to comprise of the following Members: Councillors Mrs Bower, Bubb, Mrs S Collop, Crofts and A Tyler.

EC34: **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members of the Panel were reminded that there was an eform available on the intranet which could be completed and submitted if Members had items which they would like to be considered for addition to the Work Programme.

The following additions/amendments were suggested to the Work Programme:

- Leisure Trust update – an update had been received in July, so the update scheduled for November could be slipped.
- Report of the Informal Working Group – Public Toilets – to be received on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel's Work Programme was noted, with the above amendments.

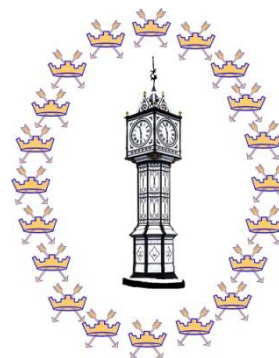
EC35: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX.

**The meeting closed at 8.00 pm**

Minute Item EC33:

# Downham Market Town Council



**15 Paradise Road, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9HS**

Tel: (01366) 387770

E-Mail: [info@downhammarkettc.co.uk](mailto:info@downhammarkettc.co.uk)

Town Clerk: Mrs J M Markwell

Dear Cllr Sampson,

**Re: Environment and Community Panel meeting on Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016  
Agenda item 9 - Public Toilets Review**

With reference item 9 on the agenda of your forthcoming meeting on 31st August, Downham Market Town Council would like to make the following comments about the toilets situated in Downham Market.

**Wales Court - Town Hall Car Park Toilets**

Although the operatives keep the toilets to a reasonable standard there are serious concerns about the overall condition of them.

Firstly there is intermittent water supply to the sinks and therefore we would say it was very unhygienic for users to the facility to be unable to wash their hands. This is felt to be a matter of great urgency and has been discussed many times with both responsible Borough Cllrs and Officers to no avail. It shows within the figures in the Public Toilets Review report that only £1128 has been spent on repairs against staff/vehicle costs of £14000.

This is an extremely well-used facility being in the centre of the town and it needs to be brought up to a high standard. The Town Council would object strongly to these toilets being closed.

**Howdale Toilets**

These are adjacent to a recreation area, owned by the Borough Council, and there are many families and young children using the play equipment and the leisure space to enjoy outside activities together as a family. Therefore the Town Council would not want this facility closed.

**War Memorial Playing Field Toilets**

Again these are on Borough Council property and are heavily used by residents and visitors who watch the football and cricket throughout the year. Therefore the Town Council would not want this facility to be closed.



**Generally**

It should be noted that in the Public Toilet Review report all three facilities in Downham Market are on the 'Transfer or Closure' list. Therefore it could be possible that this town is left with NO public toilets.

Furthermore I would foresee that the Town Council would not want to take ownership, nor would it expect to pay on special expenses unless every other area is charged in the same way.

Within the report it states that senior citizens have a higher need for public conveniences and as you are aware Downham Market does have a higher than average elderly population.

It is understood that there are significant costs to provide public facilities and for the Borough Council to want to pass this cost to the Parish; this would result in an increase in the Parish precept which of course would be passed onto residents.

So although the Borough Council can make a saving the residents do not, remembering this cost is already within the Council Tax bill. Could this not be seen as double charging?

*Please note that appendix 1 of the report states that there is one disabled toilet and one baby changing unit in the Wales Court facility and none anywhere else, but appendix 2 says that there is one disabled toilet in Wales Courts and one disable toilet in Memorial Fields and no baby changing units anywhere.*

Yours sincerely

Jean Markwell  
Town Clerk  
25<sup>th</sup> August 2016