

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, 15th December, 2016 at 5.30 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs S Collop (Chairman)
Councillors Miss L Bambridge, J Collop, C Joyce, G Middleton, P Rochford,
A Tyler, Mrs M Wilkinson and T Wing-Pentelow

An apology for absence was received from Councillor I Gourlay, G McGuinness and T Smith

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

3 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present under Standing Order 34.

4 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was no Chairman's correspondence.

5 **KING'S LYNN SPECIAL EXPENSES 2017/2018 AND FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Assistant Director (Finance) explained that at the last meeting held on 5 October 2016 it was agreed to hold a Special Meeting to consider the King's Lynn Special Expenses charge for 2017/2018. The Committee had received background information on all elements of the King's Lynn Special Expenses prior to the meeting.

The Committee also agreed that the Council enter discussions with the current owners of the bus shelters within King's Lynn with a view to taking these on when the current contract expired on 6 January 2017.

The Environment & Community Panel also received the following reports which should have been considered as background information to setting the King's Lynn Special Expenses Charges:

Meeting 23 November 2016
Meeting 12 October 2016

Public Toilets Review
Grass Cutting Review

The Assistant Director (Finance) drew the Committee's attention to the table in paragraph 5, which set out the current services provided within special expenses and the estimate for 2017/18. It was noted that the Band D Charge for 2017/2018 would be £46.59, whereas the Band D Charge for 2016/2017 was £43.30.

The Committee was then invited to consider any reductions and/or additions that they wished to recommend to Cabinet for 2017/2018.

The Committee discussed the following:

In response to a query from Councillor Joyce, the Assistant Director (Finance) advised that the 2017/2018 Council Tax base for King's Lynn was based on 18,272 dwellings. After deducting exemptions and discounts, including the Local Council Tax Support the Band D equivalent tax base 2017/2018 for King's Lynn was 9,783.7

Bus Shelters

The Assistant Director (Finance) explained that discussions had been concluded with the owners of the bus shelters however the legal work had yet to be finalised. At the last meeting, the Committee had been supportive of the taking on the bus shelters once the current agreement expired on 6 January 2017.

The Leader explained that the decision would be made through a Cabinet Member's Delegated Decision.

The Assistant Director (Finance) explained that a notional amount of £13,000 had been included within Special Expenses.

The Leader explained that most Parish Councils provided bus shelters and did generally meet the costs.

In response to a question regarding damaged bus shelters, the Assistant Director (Finance) explained that they had all been inspected and a schedule of the bus shelters had been attached to the agenda.

Footway Lights

Councillor Joyce raised the issue of footway lights and explained that Norfolk County Council claimed that all street lights met the BS 5489 standard, however much of it did not, including Nar Ouse Way. BS5489 required facial recognition with CCTV and no dark spots. He added that the Vancouver Centre and Railway Station car park did meet the standard. The Borough Council were the only district council to be included in the PFI contract. The contract would have included maintenance which should include repairs or replacement.

The Leader explained that the PFI contract with Norfolk County Council was not for every single light in the Borough. He explained that the special expenses related to other lights which were not in the PFI contract. He added that by replacing lights to the LED modern lights would save electricity and maintenance. Also, CCTV would express concerns if they could not see areas due to dark spots.

The Assistant Director explained that recommendation 3 proposed that items could be placed on the work programme for the Committee to consider in detail, and this was an item that could be considered further.

The Assistant Director (Finance) explained that the list of streets which were charged to Special Expenses had been circulated to the Committee.

Councillor Joyce proposed a recommendation to Cabinet that investigation takes place in relation to footway lighting to see if savings could be made in the unparished area of King's Lynn. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilkinson and agreed by the Committee.

Open/Closed Churchyards

Councillor Joyce stated that the Borough Council should not be picking up the expense of open cemeteries and should be included as a special expense.

The Assistant Director (Finance) explained that it was historical that open churchyards were not charged to special expenses.

The Leader stated that usually open churchyards were the responsibility of those running the churchyards and collected fees for burials.

Councillor Rochford stated that at the previous meeting, the Committee discussed how it would bring ideas forward of what the Committee wanted to do. However, there was no money available in the budget.

The Leader stated that it was for the Committee to identify priorities for King's Lynn. The report detailed the baseline position of where it was now. He added that if the Committee was minded to make recommendations for additional facilities or a different level of service then this was the time to make those recommendations.

He added that any recommendations made by this Committee needed to be factual, and Cabinet would consider them.

Pavilions

Councillor Joyce queried the cost in relation pavilions.

The Assistant Director (Finance) referred the Committee to page of the additional papers which had been circulated. She explained that the costs had been based on what actually happened in 2015/2016.

Councillor Joyce suggested that investigation take place as to whether the costs along with any income from the Dutton pavilion and Kingsway pavilion could be go to Alive Leisure.

The Assistant Director (Finance) explained that the income came to the Borough Council and not Alive Leisure.

Councillor Joyce further suggested that any money saved should be directly spent on handing out fixed penalty notices to dog fouling.

Open Spaces

Councillor Joyce highlighted that the cost was over £1,000 per acre to cut grass.

The Operations Manager explained the formula used to calculate how open space charges were calculated.

Councillor Joyce suggested that rather than having a prescriptive number of grass cuts, the contractor could be asked to maintain the grassed area to a reasonable standard.

The Operations Manager explained the reasons why that would not be cost effective and added that this year the team was still cutting grass in November. She explained that the team went out and assessed an area, and if it did not require cutting then the team would carry out other activities. The schedule meant that everywhere in the Borough had an equal service. The Operations Manager also explained that the Committee had received a presentation from her on grounds maintenance and how costs were calculated. When the review of grounds maintenance was carried out, areas which were deemed not to be cost effective to maintain was sent to Property Services to pass on to residents if they wished.

The Leader stated that the within the report figures had been provided on how much the grounds maintenance cost for King's Lynn. He explained that this area of work had been considered by the Environment & Community Panel and that was the correct Forum to do so.

The Committee expressed concern that the Council carried out more cuts for Norfolk County Council than the 5 they actually paid for.

The Leader, Councillor Long suggested that the Committee could make direct representations to Norfolk County Council regarding the

number of cuts that they paid for. He explained that the Borough had carried out additional cuts to create a better impression of King's Lynn.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, explained that the reason that the Borough Council carried out additional cuts was for the residents and not for Norfolk County Council.

Public Toilets

Councillor J Collop stated that he wanted to see all public toilets kept open in King's Lynn, particularly Ferry Street and the toilets at Gaywood.

The Assistant Director (Finance) reminded the Committee that a Working Group had been set up which reported to the E&C Panel. The recommendation from the Working Group was to consult with KLACC and Parishes and that a trial closure be implemented for Ferry Street and Gaywood toilets.

The Leader, Councillor Long advised that KLACC was a consultative committee only. He suggested that members of the Committee could have gone along to the E&C Panel under Standing Order 34 to make representations.

Councillor J Collop proposed that the Ferry Street and Gaywood toilets should be kept open and this would be offset by the Council only carrying out the 5 paid for cuts for Norfolk County Council. This was seconded by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs S Collop.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs S Collop advised the Committee that she and the Vice-Chairman had invited the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community to attend the meeting but as yet she had not received a reply. He had sent a response to the Clerk. She asked for her disappointment that he had not responded to her to be noted.

Recommendations

Councillor J Collop stated that he did not agree with recommendation 1 and asked what the implications would be if the Committee did not support it. The Assistant Director (Finance) explained the timescales involved and that in order to agree the budget for 2017/18 it would need to be determined by Cabinet in January 2017.

Councillor Joyce suggested that Special Expenses should be increased by £20,000 (contingency fund) for Band D and to include looking at savings for closed cemeteries and open spaces with any savings to be spent on keeping the Ferry Street and Gaywood toilets open.

The Assistant Director (Finance) advised that when the annual council tax bills were sent out for each year, the Council received questions

from taxpayers regarding the costs included and the reason for any contingency sum would need to be explained to the taxpayers of King's Lynn.

The Committee then voted on the proposal to keep the Ferry Street and Gaywood toilets open and add to special expenses for 2017/18 and to reduce the number of Norfolk County Council grass cuts to 5, which was lost.

Councillor Joyce then proposed that investigations be undertaken to seek savings in Special Expenses in order to fund the Committee's priorities for the next round of the budget for 2018/2019. This was seconded by Councillor Rochford and agreed by the Committee.

Recommendations to Cabinet:

(1) That the King's Lynn Area Consultation Committee endorse the special expenses charge for 2017/2018 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

(2) The Committee deferred recommendation 2 – the operating costs of the public conveniences in the Walks to be included in King's Lynn Special Expenses from 1 April 2016.

(3) That at the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee meeting on 5 January 2017 the Committee will determine the items to be considered and the work programme for these, to tie in with the budget timetable for 2018/2019.

(4) That investigation be undertaken to seek savings in special expenses in order to fund the Committee's priorities for the next round of the budget for 2018/2019.

(5) That investigation takes place in relation to footway lighting to see if savings could be made in the unparished area of King's Lynn.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee would be held on **Thursday 5 January 2017** at **6pm** in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm