

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, 19th October, 2017 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor A Tyler (Chairman)
Councillors Miss L Bambridge, Mrs S Collop, G Howman, C Joyce, G Middleton, M Taylor and Mrs M Wilkinson

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Collop and T Smith.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business under Standing Order 7.

5 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There were no members present under Standing Order 34.

6 CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)

There was no Chairman's correspondence to report.

7 PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

The Executive Director – Commercialisation introduced the report and explained that the Committee's Terms of Reference had been amended to allow it to consider small scale highway improvement schemes within the unparished areas of King's Lynn and West Lynn, under the County Council's Parish Partnership Programme (PPP). The PPP allowed Parish Councils to bid for match funding for small scale

highway improvement schemes in their area. In the unparished area of King's Lynn and West Lynn, KLACC would now consider any scheme put forward. If KLACC decided to support a particular scheme, the recommendation would be passed to Cabinet for their consideration.

It was explained that one scheme had been put forward for 2018/19. This was a scheme for two Speed Awareness Messaging (SAM) signs to be located on either Vancouver Avenue, Goodwins Road, or Tennyson Road. The proposed signs showed the speed of vehicles if they exceeded the limit, with the legend 'slow down' as part of the unit. There were 5 locations on Vancouver Avenue, Goodwins Road and Tennyson Road which could accommodate the signs, which were moveable, and should only be at each location once every 3 months. Further locations would be agreed with Highways as required. Arrangements were being put in place with local residents to charge the signs and move them as required.

In relation to the financial implications of the proposal, it was reported that the costs of the scheme would be:

2 SAM signs @ £3,500 each	=	£7,000
KLWNBC Match finding required	=	£3,500

It was explained that in the same way that Parishes would fund highway works in their areas through precepts, funding for the signs would need to come out of King's Lynn Special Expenses.

The Chairman suggested that if the Committee decided to support the proposal then recommendation 2 be deferred and considered with the Special Expenses item on the agenda.

The Chairman introduced Andy Wallace from Norfolk County Council to answer any technical questions that the Committee might have.

In response to queries, Andy Wallace explained that the signs would be battery powered. Local volunteers would charge the batteries and change the location of signs.

Councillor Middleton explained that each County Councillor had been allocated a highway budget of £6,000 which they could spend within their division. Councillors Kemp and Smith had pledged to put their budget towards reinstating the 7.5 tonne limit on the B1144. Therefore there would not be any funds available to put towards the SAM signs. It was explained that the budget for County Councillors would be reviewed year on year.

Councillor Mrs Wilkinson expressed concern that if the County Councillor had allocated their budget to one area, what happened to the other areas.

Councillor Middleton outlined how he had gone about allocating his budget but added that it was up to the individual Councillor to prioritise.

The Leader advised that a Legal Order in respect of weight restrictions was expensive to impose, but it was down to the choice of the County Councillor concerned how they spent their budget.

Councillor Bambridge informed the Committee that another speed-watch session took place recently and in an hour and a half, 39 vehicles were caught speeding.

The Executive Director – Commercial Services advised the Committee that the SAM signs would be able to collect data in terms of what speeds people were travelling.

Andy Wallace informed the Committee that the company who supplied the signs would give training to the volunteers on how to use the signs, charge them, etc.

Councillors Miss Bambridge and the Chairman informed the Committee that ideally residents wanted a crossing at the Avenue Road junction however there was a slight bend in the road. Another alternative for a crossing was close to the railway lines but this would need to be an alternative scheme.

The Committee agreed to defer recommendation 2 to the next item of business on the agenda, as options on how to fund the scheme had been outlined.

The Committee then made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- (1) That the King's Lynn Advisory Consultative Committee supports the proposal for SAM signage in King's Lynn.
- (2) That the Chairman and Councillor J Collop be nominated to represent the Committee's view to Cabinet.

8 **KING'S LYNN SPECIAL EXPENSES 2018/2019 - REPORT TO FOLLOW**

The Committee was reminded that one of its Terms of Reference was "to act as a consultative forum on the funding raised by, and utilisation of the King's Lynn Special Expenses, and to offer input on priorities for this expenditure and if appropriate the level of funds to be raised".

The Committee was informed that the Local Government Finance Act 1992 defined a Local Authority's Special Expenses. It stated that Special Expenses were any expenses incurred by the authority in performing in a part of its area, a function performed elsewhere by a Parish Council.

The Committee noted that Special Expenses were currently charged for:

- Footway lighting
- Play areas
- Community centres
- Closed churchyards
- Allotments
- Pavilions
- Dog bins
- Open spaces; and
- Bus shelters.

It was explained that the total cost of Special Expenses was met by the Council tax payers of King's Lynn. The annual charge to residents was made through an addition to the Council tax bill.

It was reported that during 2017, the Committee reviewed elements of the special expenses charge and a summary of recommendations were outlined in the report.

The Committee's attention was drawn to Section 1.4 of the report and it was explained that £46.59 was currently being charged for Band D for 2017/18.

The Executive Director – Finance explained that during 2017, the Committee had reviewed elements of the Special Expenses charge and a summary of the recommendations made on the topics was reported.

It was explained that the special expenses charged in 2017/2018 would be used as the basis for the calculation for 218/2019. The estimates had been reviewed and updated to reflect current costs and there was an estimated reduction in costs of £1,040.

The Executive Director – Finance highlighted the main movements as set out in the report in relation to:

- ***Footway lighting***

Councillor Joyce stated that he was surprised to see a 30% increase in electricity costs. He asked for assurance that going forward on-going electricity costs should be balanced out by the Refit programme.

The Leader explained that the Refit programme would look at other alternative technologies when they became available.

The Chairman asked whether the Refit programme would look at what lights were actually needed or not.

The Executive Director – Commercial Services advised that a member of staff would be assessing all the street lights. It was explained that as the light levels would be higher it might be possible for there to be less lights in certain locations.

The Executive Director asked that if any member had any areas where street lights could be reduced or needed to be increased then to let him know.

- ***Community Centre costs***

The Executive Director – Finance explained that a business rates valuation specialist had been appointed by the Council to review the valuation of all the council assets following the business rates revaluation from 1 April 2017 and this would include community centres and pavilions.

Councillor Joyce referred to the business rates of the Dutton Pavilion at £21,000 as opposed to the business rates of King's Lynn Football Club which was £9,100. He added that the Football Club had changing rooms, a bar and restaurant but the business rates were only half the cost of the Dutton Pavilion. The Executive Director – Finance explained that this would be referred to the specialist to investigate as part of their review.

Councillor Joyce also referred to relief for groups using the South Lynn Community Centre.

The Committee was informed that the Council could not award itself rate reliefs that might be awarded to charities. The Executive Director – Finance further explained that valuations for business rates were complex, which was why the Council had engaged a specialist to carry out the review. The Council can, however, look at how the lease could be structured, to reflect the uses and take advantage of reliefs if possible.

Councillor Joyce queried whether the pavilions and community centres should be charged to King's Lynn Special Expenses.

The Leader referred to the pavilion at Terrington St Clement, where the whole cost was met by the Parish Council and was used by the local football team but also away teams.

Councillor Joyce suggested setting up a charity for the King's Lynn facilities to be investigated. The Executive Director – Commercialisation explained that this had been looked at but the costs did not stack up.

- ***Allotment costs***

The Executive Director – Finance reported that allotment costs had reduced by £3,770 mainly due to a reduction in the maintenance budget. It was estimated that additional income of £14,970 would be raised in 2018/19.

- ***Open Spaces costs***

The Executive Director – Finance pointed out an error and it should read hedge trimming was twice a year rather than 12 times.

Councillor Mrs S Collop stated that the Borough Council should not be cutting Norfolk County Council grass any more times than what the Council was being paid for.

The Executive Director – Commercial Services advised that Norfolk County Council grass cutting was not charged to King's Lynn Special Expenses. He also advised that the Borough Council did not cut grass on Freebridge land. He undertook to send Councillor Mrs Wilkinson and Howman a map of the public open space in their area and who was responsible for cutting grass.

The Leader explained that grass cutting was an emotive subject but he wanted King's Lynn to have the best appearance it could afford. He added that it was much better to cut the grass together than leave NCC grass uncut.

Councillor Middleton added that most Parish Councils were of the same opinion and if they wanted the grass cut more then they often had to find extra money for it to be carried out.

- ***Bus Shelter costs***

It was noted that bus shelter costs had decreased by £2,040 due to estimated additional income from advertising.

The Committee's attention was drawn to paragraph 2.7 of the report, where it explained that the total council tax support grant available would reduce in 2018/19 by 32% in line with the reduction in the Council's overall revenue support grant.

The Committee noted the current estimate of Special Expenses charge for 2018/19, which was subject to change as the budgets were reviewed during the budget setting process.

Public Toilets

The Committee discussed whether both sets of toilets in the Walks should remain open or whether one set should be closed. The Committee also discussed the proposal to charge 80% of costs to special expenses. Some Members of the Committee felt that the 80% charge was too high given the footfall for larger events which were held

in the Walks. It was explained that the Borough did receive income when the events were held.

The Executive Director – Commercialisation explained that to rebuild a set of toilets would be in the region of £75,000 to £100,000.

Councillor Mrs Collop informed the Committee that the E&C Panel had recommended that the toilets at Gaywood remained open.

The Chairman added that he considered that Gaywood should have a set of toilets.

The Executive Director – Commercialisation explained that this was an emotive subject but the toilets at Gaywood had been in a terrible condition before their closure. He added that they had been closed for 7 months now and there had not been many complaints regarding their closure. In relation to the £10,000 costs for the toilets, he explained that there were a lot of other things that the money could be spent on in King's Lynn.

Councillor Joyce agreed that the Gaywood toilets were far from adequate and he suggested that the Executive Director could carry out some realistic costings for their replacement in the future.

Councillor Middleton proposed that the Gaywood toilets should remain closed, with the two sets of toilet at the Walks remaining open with an 80% charge to King's Lynn Special Expenses. This was seconded by Councillor Joyce who added that costs and plans be evaluated and reported back to the Committee on building a new set of facilities. This was put to the vote and carried.

Increase in Special Expenses Charge

Councillor Joyce proposed that the Band D charge should be increased to £2.50. This would be to help offset the reduction in the revenue support grant and to allow a small amount of money to be used to market Community Centres and other priorities to be identified by KLACC. This increase would encompass the increase for the Parish Partnership Scheme and Public Toilets. This was seconded by Councillor Middleton and agreed by the Committee.

Recommendations:

The Committee was invited to make recommendations to Cabinet on the King's Lynn Special Expenses, in line with their current terms of reference.

Councillor Mrs Collop, as Ward Member, asked for her vote to be recorded against recommendation (3).

(1) That the underspend reported at 2017/2018 year end on charges made to King's Lynn Special Expenses be transferred to the reserves to provide matched funding for future bids against the Parish Partnership Scheme.

(2) That the Parish Partnership Funding for 2018/19 is recovered over 5 years –as outlined in option (a) of the report.

(3) That in relation to public toilets, the Gaywood toilets are to remain closed but costs and plans be evaluated and reported back to the Committee on building a new set of facilities. The Broadwalk and Management Building toilets in the Walks to remain open with 80% of costs charged to Special Expenses.

(4) The Committee recommends an increase of £2.50 in Special Expenses resulting in a Band D charge of £49.09 which encompasses the increase for the Parish Partnership Scheme and Public Toilets.

(5) That Councillors G Middleton be nominated to represent the Committee's view to Cabinet.

(6) That Councillor J Collop be nominated to speak to Cabinet under Standing Order 34.

9 **COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET'S FORWARD DECISION LIST**

The Committee noted the Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Decision List.

10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Monday, 15 January 2017 at 6.00pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm