

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel held on Tuesday, 12th March, 2019 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors P Gidney (Chairman), Mrs J Collingham, C J Crofts, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, M Howland, T Smith, A Tyler, Mrs E Watson and D Whitby

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor P Hodson – Portfolio Holder for Performance and Economic Development

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

OFFICERS:

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director

Martin Chisholm – Business Manager

BY INVITATION:

Howard Johnston – King's Lynn to Hunstanton Railway

Councillor Westrop – Chairman of the River Informal Working Group

RD86: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED: Councillor Whitby was appointed Vice Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

RD87: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beales, Blunt, Devereux and Long.

RD88: MINUTES

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

RD89: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Baron Chenery of Horsbrugh declared a non-pecuniary interest in item RD93 as he was the Norfolk County Council Rail Champion and a Member of the Rail Group.

RD90: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD91: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Bird – RD93: King's Lynn to Hunstanton Railway.

RD92: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

RD93: KING'S LYNN TO HUNSTANTON RAILWAY

Howard Johnson who was involved in the campaign for the King's Lynn to Hunstanton Railway gave a presentation to the Panel, as attached.

The Chairman thanked Howard Johnston for his presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to a question from Councillor Manning, it was explained that the campaign group ideally wanted a through service from Hunstanton to London. He explained that tramways were an expensive option, however an electric railway was something that could be considered. The overriding factor would be capital cost.

Councillor Smith commented that the historic railway had achieved a 10% return on investment. He asked if the route of the railway had been planned. Howard Johnston explained that there had been some ideas but the route was still unconfirmed. He acknowledged that the route could not be exactly the same as historically because some areas had been developed.

Councillor Tyler commented that the campaign group needed to get their message out and lobby the County Council. He reminded the Panel that organisations were continuously lobbying for improvements to the rail service from King's Lynn to London and Ely North Junction, however progress was slow.

Councillor Bird addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He commented that he agreed with the content of the presentation. He also referred to the Norfolk Greenways Project. He commented that the Hunstanton Southern Seafront Masterplan was still awaited, but he felt that there needed to be a co-ordinated approach for the long term vision for Hunstanton which needed political buy in and joint working between the Borough and County Council. He suggested that there should be a working party formed to look at the future of Hunstanton.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Howard Johnston explained that there were lots of organisations involved in the campaign for better transport. He also explained that single track was cheaper to install, however in order to future proof any development, double track would be better.

The Chairman explained that he would consider the way forward at the next sifting meeting.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the information.

RD94: **REPORT OF THE RIVER INFORMAL WORKING GROUP**

The Chairman of the Informal Working Group, Councillor Westrop, presented the findings of the Informal Working Group, as attached.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Westrop for her presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Manning commented that he supported the recommendations put forward by the Panel and hoped that they would link in with the Nelson Quay redevelopment to improve the area as a whole. Councillor Westrop acknowledged that the work of the Informal Working Group was only a small part of improving the area and she felt that an overall strategy for the River was required.

Councillor Smith explained that the use of the Sea Cadets building would provide much needed facilities. He also asked if the facilities proposed for Saddlebow could be brought closer to the town centre. Councillor Westrop explained that potential extension to the Pontoons, and discussions with the Conservancy Board, could result in more flexible operation of the Pontoons, for example longer stays and different types of craft could be accommodated, therefore there was perhaps no need to bring the facilities at Saddlebow closer, and instead the existing cycle paths and walkways from Saddlebow to the town centre could be better utilised. It was explained that the benefit of Saddlebow was that it was not tidal, connected to inland waterways and there were small improvements which could be made to improve the facilities available.

Councillor Mrs Watson asked if the Informal Working Group had explored commercial activities such as a Chandlery. It was commented that this had not been explored by the Group as it was felt that generating activity along the River needed to come before any commercial activities.

In response to a question from Councillor Crofts it was explained that the result of the CCF bid was expected in April 2019.

Councillor Mrs Collingham commented that it was difficult to navigate the Wash, therefore people needed a reason to come to King's Lynn. She felt that more should be done to use the river as an amenity including leisure facilities and commented that the promotion of Saddlebow for inland vessels would be good to increase visitors.

RESOLVED: The Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations from the Informal Working Group, as set out below:

1. That the Council endorse the vision and objectives set out in the Sail the Wash initiative and that the Council continue to support and encourage further marine leisure activity of the river and the Wash.
2. Support longer term development of marine leisure activity at Boal Quay.
3. Endorse the recommendations set out in the 'Development of Marine Leisure Activity in the Wash' by P D Harvey Consulting, 2018.
4. Develop further the facilities at King's Lynn Visitor Pontoons. The Informal Working Group put forward options for this:
 - a. Support the Stage 2 application to the Coastal Community Fund to:
 - i. Extend the existing visitor pontoons to accommodate demand at peak times.
 - ii. Install swing moorings to start the provision of permanent mooring facilities in King's Lynn.
 - iii. Improve mooring and anchorage in the Wash.
 - iv. Develop further the marketing of Sail the Wash
 - v. Employment of Marine Officer to deal with marketing and meet and greet.
 - b. Discussions to be held with the owners of the Sea Cadets building regarding potential use of the facilities they had available for toilet and shower facilities (preferred option).
 - c. Provide a solution for waste disposal at Baker Lane.
5. That the Council acknowledge that the existing slipway is not fit for general marine purposed and give consideration to the installation of a new slipway, or relocation of the existing slipway to Boal Quay or an alternative appropriate location as part of the Nelson Quay redevelopment.
6. Support the Environment Agency to make improvements to the facilities available at Saddlebow including the installation of additional moorings and better utilisation of the existing pedestrian and cycle link between Saddlebow and King's Lynn including marketing and promotion.
7. The relevant Portfolio Holder engage in initial discussions with ABP regarding the potential provision of lift and store facilities in King's Lynn.
8. Officers engage with the Environment Agency to monitor the effect of the Denver visioning statement on the development of the river.

9. That if the CCF Bid is unsuccessful the Regeneration and Development Panel give consideration to reconvening the Informal Working Group to explore if there are any alternative options.

RD95: **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RD96: **EXEMPT - GUILDHALL UPDATE**

The Executive Director presented an update on the Guildhall. He explained that a statement would be released to the press and public in the next month.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Director for the update. The Executive Director and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, Councillor Mrs Nockolds responded to questions from the Panel.

RESOLVED: (i) The Panel noted their thanks to the officers and Portfolio Holder for the work carried out on the Guildhall.
(ii) The Panel noted the update.

RD97: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

Members of the Panel were reminded that an eform was 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.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

RD98: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on Tuesday 9th April 2019 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.12 pm



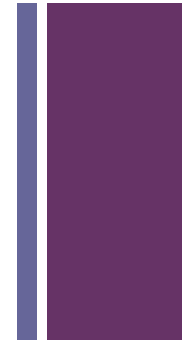
CONNECTIVITY

King's Lynn-Hunstanton Railway Campaign

Howard Johnston FCILT March 2019

www.hunstantonrail.org.uk

+ The challenges ahead



- Hunstanton and villages along the Wash Coast face serious problems if connectivity with King's Lynn and Cambridge is not significantly improved over the next ten years
- It will become impossible to retain young people
- The total number of over-75s will become unmanageable
- We must encourage investors to create jobs on the doorstep
- We must retain and improve our tourism without 'carmageddon'

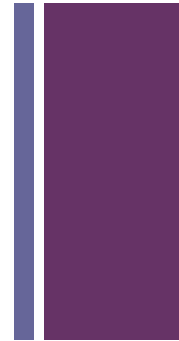
+ The Cambridge Connection



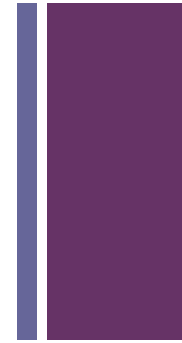
- The fastest growing city economy in the UK
- 2017/18 - goods and services worth £9.4billion
- Industrial parks lead the way in wireless technology, display technology, and mobile telecommunications
- All our local youngsters need a slice of the action

+ The new railway

- Hunstanton to King's Lynn: Just 29 min
- Hunstanton to Heacham 5 min
- Heacham to Snettisham 6 min
- Snettisham to Dersingham 4 min
- Dersingham to QE Hospital 7 min
- QE Hospital to King's Lynn 7 min
- ... and Cambridge Just 82 min



+ Don't blame Dr Beeching



- Closure was not in the 1963 Beeching Report
- Government moved the goalposts
- Through London trains and excursions cancelled
- Norwich and East Midlands feeder lines shut
- A clear way for motor coaches and private cars

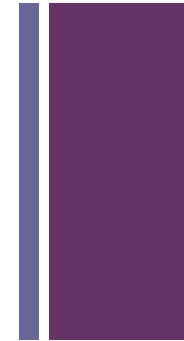
+ Times have changed. We now need...



- Better accessibility to services and opportunities
- More and simpler travel choices for everyone
- More reliable, quicker and seamless journeys
- Appropriate and sustainable housing and economic growth
- Reductions in carbon emissions
- Safer environments and reductions in casualties

+ Who pays for a new railway?

- MEDIUM AND LONG TERM OPPORTUNITIES
- Capital funding
- Major scheme funding
- Developer funding
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Norfolk Infrastructure Fund
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund
- Regional Growth Fund
- Tax Incremental Financing
- The New Homes bonus
- *The EU – maybe....*



+ UK railway revival gathers pace



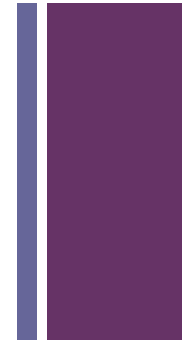
- Over 200 railway reopenings identified – including Wisbech-March
- Many schemes vigorously supported by local, county and regional authorities
- Recent national transport reports
- So, why not in West Norfolk??

+ Suffocation by ageing population



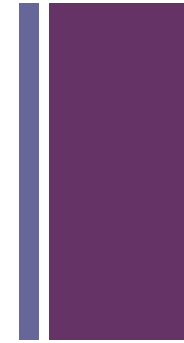
- North West Norfolk is in bottom half of the list of UK's most deprived areas; almost the worst performer in Norfolk and Suffolk
- The National Average Age is 39
- Hunstanton's average age is 59, Heacham 58, Dersingham 56, Snettisham 55, King's Lynn 45
- 43% of the population of Hunstanton is over 65
- 1,000 new homes will further congest the A149
- Care homes can't recruit staff

+ Norfolk's County Transport Plan



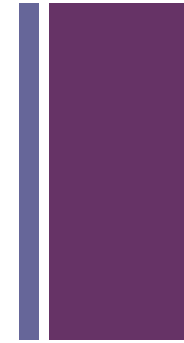
- Investing for the best return – but it's not around here
- *“Significant numbers of people have to travel relatively long distances to access everyday facilities, often with the added challenge of variable quality public transport.”*
- *“A short term injection of funding is unlikely to result in longer term changes in travel behaviour, so building longevity into such projects is essential.”*
- Cambridgeshire Mayor James Palmer suggests a King's Lynn-Wisbech fixed link for joint benefits including tourism

+ What a new railway offers



- There's no time for romance
- A King's Lynn-Hunstanton line is an extremely successful people mover
- More A149 spending would make little difference
- A 'closer' Queen Elizabeth Hospital could be a life saver during peak holiday times.
- More tourism. It is expected to increase from places such as the new Wisbech Garden Town (pop 75,000)

+ It's just not true!



- **Too much of the old railway trackbed has been built over**

A partial new alignment increases the new route's relevance)

- **It'll cost too much.** *£10 million/mile is achievable. Over a 50 year life span, a £100 million Hunstanton railway is just £2 million/year*

- **Roads are easier and cheaper to build**

The West Winch relief road may cost £10 million, and the Hardwick Interchange £14 million. Spalding's new bypass - about three miles – will be £100 million

- **It will take too long to build.** *It can be achieved in six years*

+ Tourism



- North West Norfolk is almost entirely dependent on tourism
- This is expected to increase from places such as the new Wisbech Garden Town (pop 75,000)
- Road congestion has been a controversial issue for at the last 60 years
- Road improvements have never kept pace
- The young and elderly can't spontaneously get here
- Reinstating the railway seems a no-brainer here

+ Scottish Borders success story



- Revived Edinburgh-Galashiels railway – 36 miles
- Cost £300 million to put back despite new bridges and tunnels, and realignment of busy Edinburgh southern bypass
- After four years, trains heavily loaded
- Depressed Galashiels economy is turning round
- Twin town of Hawick (18 miles away) screaming for railway extension



How do WE get a new railway?

- It's not rocket science
- Get talking
- Identify the problem
- Gather the data
- Develop the options
- Secure priorities in the planning process
- Discuss funding options
- Secure the powers
- Seek approvals
- Get mobilised and let the contracts





SUMMARY



- A new railway will help grow the North West Norfolk economy and stabilise the exodus of young people
- We need better connectivity to Cambridge (and London)
- More road building alone is problematic, expensive, and will not achieve long-term sustainability goals
- A new railway is both affordable and physically achievable

+ COUNCIL ACTIONS



- **PLEASE** make a proposal to the Cabinet to adopt a policy of reopening the Hunstanton railway, which is critical for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the people and communities of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
- It won't cost any money to include this as part of a planning vision. If opportunities arise, the fact that it is identified as a potentially beneficial goal may put BCKLWN in the front seat for future funding assistance.



“Hunstanton appears condemned to remain remote from the rail network, forever held back by road congestion and peripherality.”

Chris Austin OBE

Former British Railways Board Member and Strategic Rail Authority Executive Director



Report of the River Informal Working Group

Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

Regeneration and Development Panel

March 12th 2019

Brief give to the working party

- Investigate
- The future of the pontoons
- The Sail the Wash Project
- The Use of the Inland Waterways

911



Membership of the Informal Working Group

- **Councilors**

- Collingham

- Hipperson

- Howland

- Kunes

- Westrop (Chair)

- **Officers**

- Jemma Curtis

- Jason Richardson

- Martin Chisholm

- Rebecca Parker

Others involved

- Peter Harvey – Marine Consultant – Sail the Wash Project and advisor on marine opportunities to develop marine leisure tourism in the Wash
- Paul Separivuc Waterways Operation Manager Environment Agency
- Robbie Bell and Adrian Tebutt RYA – advising on water sport trends facilities and activities
- Captain Patrick Jary
- Bob Panrucker Kings Lynn Coastal Rowing Association
- Councillor Squire attended under Standing order 34 on occasion

Other activities

- Reviewed the Sail the Wash Report
- Looked at the data behind the bid
- Visited other sites in the Borough and reported back to the working party on the issues discovered
- Reviewed and interrogated data that has been collected re the experiences of visitors to the Pontoons
- Tested that against information received from people that came to the working group to give their views

Recommendations

- Develop Further the facilities at Kings Lynn Visitor pontoons
- Propose one of three options (option two preferred)
 1. Support the stage two application to the Coastal Community Fund
 2. Discuss with the Sea Cadets the use of facilities
 3. Provide a solution for waste disposal at Baker Lane

Recommendation

Sea Cadets Baker Lane ?

- Feedback about why the Pontoons are not an attractive destination – NO FACILITIES !!!
- Use of facilities in the Sea Cadet building = shower and toilet facilities in proximity to the pontoons become available
- Baker lane waste disposal possible with modification but not in proximity to the Pontoons
- Sea Cadets
- Option two is recommended

Recommendations

- The Council endorses the Vision and Objectives set out in the Sail the Wash initiative
- Endorse the recommendations set out in Development of Marine Leisure Activity in the Wash
- The Council continue to support and encourage further marine leisure activity on the river and the wash
- Support consideration to long term development of marine leisure activity at Boal Quay

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Stage 2 application what does it mean ?

- Extend the existing visitor pontoons to accommodate demand at peak times
- Install swing mooring to start the provision of permanent mooring facilities in Kings Lynn
- Improve mooring and anchorage in the Wash
- Employment of Marine Officer to deal with marketing meet and greet etc.

Recommendation slipway

- Council acknowledge the existing slipway is not fit for general marine purposes and therefore consider
- Installing a new slipway
- Relocate the existing slipway at Boal Quay
- Alternative appropriate location as part of the Nelson Quay redevelopment

Saddlebow

- The ability to attract water way users to Lynn – i.e. make Lynn a destination of choice
- Environment Agency can be supported to make improvements to the facilities available at Saddlebow
- Additional moorings
- WHICH WOULD
- Better utilise the existing footpaths and cycle links into Lynn from Saddlebow
- Provide opportunity for greater footfall of people coming in from that route particularly if marketed correctly

Other recommendations

- Relevant Portfolio Holder engage in initial discussions with ABP regarding the potential provision of lift and store facilities in Kings Lynn
- Officers engage with Environment Agency to monitor the effect of the Denver Visioning Statement on the development of the river

BUT.....

- CCF bid may not be successful and if this were so then we suggest the Regeneration and Development Panel consider reconvening the Informal working group to explore if there are any options

Lastly

- A thank you to all the staff who supported the working group and who put in a lot of hard work and produced a lot of information and data that enabled us to come up with the recommendations we have which we believe will
- “Improve the offer along the river and the facilitates available to develop Kings Lynn as a more attractive and accessible tourism destination for the marine leisure market