

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 Monday, 29th October, 2018 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillors Miss L Bambridge, J Collop, Mrs S Collop,
G Howman, C Joyce, G Middleton, T Smith and Mrs M Wilkinson

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor B Long - Leader of the Council

Officers:

Stuart Ashworth - Assistant Director
Lorraine Gore - Executive Director

1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Collop be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Councillor Tyler and Councillor G McGuinness.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to consider.

6 MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

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

There was no Chairman's correspondence to report.

8 **KING'S LYNN SPECIAL EXPENSES - 2019/2020**

The Assistant Director explained that one of the Committee's 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'.

It was reported 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 Assistant Director drew the Committee's attention to the Special Expenses which were currently charged for:

- Footway Lighting
- Play areas
- Community Centres
- Closed Churchyards
- Allotments
- Pavilions
- Dog bins
- Open spaces
- Bus shelters
- Public conveniences (80% of costs of Walks Broadwalk and Management Building facilities)
- Parish Partnership Traffic Calming

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

At the meeting held on 20 September 2018, the Committee considered the feedback from the Informal Working Group on Special Expenses. It was agreed:

- (1) That the Committee request that any Environment & Community Informal Working Group looking into grounds maintenance (including grass cutting) should include at least one member of KLACC.
- (2) That at its September meeting going forward, the Committee receives a monitoring report on expenditure within special expenses.

(3) That a budget of £1,000 be set aside for ways of promoting community centres, to be spent this financial year, given the current underspend in the community centres budget. In the event of a continued underspend, at the end of the financial year, the remainder of the monies be available to the Committee for a future marketing campaign.

(4) That in the event that (3) above is agreed, the Informal Working Group meet with officers to agree ways of spending the marketing budget.

The Assistant Director explained that the Council Tax Base for King's Lynn for 2019/2020 was 10,190.4 and this was an increase of 142.6 from 2018/2019.

This meant that the Band D charge for 2019/2020 would be £46.79.

The main movements between the special expenses charge for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 were explained to the Committee, namely:

- Footway lighting increased by £8,980 as a result of higher electricity costs.
- Pavilion costs had increased by £4,150. This was mainly due to increased charges for business rates at the Dutton Pavilion.
- Open spaces costs had been reduced by £5,240 to reflect the current schedule of actual work being undertaken.

It was reported that the total council tax support grant available would reduce in 2019/2020 by 52% in line with the reduction in the Council's overall revenue support grant. The amount of Council Tax support grant allocated to King's Lynn Special Expenses depends on the number of council tax payers receiving the discount and in 2019/2020 the grant was £7,390, a reduction of £8,860. It was anticipated that the Council would not receive revenue support grant from 2020/2021 and the council tax support grant would also end.

The Chairman then invited the Committee to make comment/ask questions, a summary of which is below:

Councillor Joyce made reference to the Dutton Pavilion and why the costs had increased. The Executive Director explained that this was mainly due to increased charges for business rates at the Dutton Pavilion and playing fields. A Check/Challenge/Appeal had been submitted to the Valuation Office. In the event that the business rates charge was revised significantly before the budget report was finalised for consideration by Cabinet in February 2019, the special expenses charge for 2019/2020 would be adjusted accordingly.

The Executive Director advised that a revised breakdown of the costs for the Dutton Pavilion could be sent to the Committee.

In relation to the Dutton Pavilion, it was asked why this had not transferred over to Alive Leisure.

In response to a query regarding the opening up of the two sets of toilets in the Walks, it was suggested that this question be directed to the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Middleton suggested that, if possible, the Dutton Pavilion, South Lynn and Fairstead Community Centre could form a part of the new Leisure structure and in turn save money on the business rates. He understood that this could only happen if they could be set up and ran as a charity.

The Leader responded that this could be considered but it would need to meet the charitable objectives.

Councillor Joyce made reference to open spaces costs and given that during the summer the grass did not have to be cut as much, what was the likelihood of the costs being under budget.

The Leader explained that previously staff would have been employed on a seasonable basis, however, staff would now be employed all year round. When staff could not cut grass they would be able to carry out other duties.

Councillor Joyce queried whether there would be a gap between the estimate and actual spend in relation to open spaces costs. He added that there was no flexibility in the budget for any additional money for the Committee to use and gave the example of marketing of the community centres.

The Executive Director explained that Monitoring Reports on special expenses could be brought to the Committee in the future. She further explained that a contingency sum was not built into special expenses.

Councillor J Collop referred to the zero amount for bus shelters. The Executive Director explained that it was estimated that income generated from advertising would cover all costs, however this would need to be monitored over the next 12 months.

Councillor Mrs S Collop explained that some of the bus shelters particularly the one along Fenland Road was in a bad state of repair. It was advised that contact be made with James Grant who was the officer responsible. *(Following the meeting it has been confirmed that repairs have been undertaken)*. It was also confirmed that the two shelters which fell within the South Wootton boundary had been removed.

Councillor Smith referred to the Budget implications announced earlier in the day in relation to the fact that business rates would not be charged on toilets. The Executive Director explained that no business

rates were currently charged on the toilets in the Walks. The Budget changes would apply to the other blocks of stand-alone toilets and the estimates would be updated once further information was made available.

Councillor J Collop referred to the speed signs, which had been obtained through the Parish Partnership scheme, and asked if it was felt that they were making any difference to speeding traffic. In response Councillor Bambridge explained that the signs themselves had to be moved into different locations and had to be charged. Councillor Bambridge added that the Speedwatch Group had not carried out a speed check since they had been installed, however she had personally noticed that motorists were slowing down.

Councillor J Collop referred to the report presented to the Committee, and added that he would like to have more information included together with a further breakdown of the figures. The Executive Director advised that the Committee had received detailed information when specific topics had been looked at during 2017. She added that a copy of the grounds maintenance sheet could be sent out with the minutes and she would take on board the comments for next year.

Councillor Middleton referred to the open spaces charge of £301,890 for 2018/19 and that the cost had been reduced for 2019/20 and stated that he would like further information on what this was being spent on.

The Leader made reference to the 80% charge for the public conveniences of the Walks Broadwalk and Management Building due to them being used by people not just from King's Lynn, and stated that consideration could be given to looking at this for grounds maintenance.

In response to a comment from Councillor Joyce regarding footway lighting, the Executive Director for Finance referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report, and explained that Cabinet would be considering a report on the Re:fit Programme, which included proposals to change to LED lighting.

Councillor Middleton asked whether consideration had been given to looking at new technology such as motion sensors as part of the Re:Fit programme. He referred to a scheme being carried out along a Norwich cyclepath which used motion sensors.

The Leader confirmed the Re:Fit programme did not include smart technology, such as that mentioned by Councillor Middleton but it would deliver savings in the region of £2.6 million for the Council.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the recommendation below, which was agreed.

RESOLVED: That, the Committee endorses the special expenses charge for 2019/2020 as set out in Section 2.2 of the report.

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

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

It was explained that the detailed review of Special Expenses topics would start in March 2019.

10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place on **Thursday, 17 January 2019 at 6pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm