

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

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 24th January, 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor N Daubney (Mayor)
 Councillors B Ayres, Miss L Bambridge, A Beales, R Bird, R Blunt, Mrs C Bower, J Collop, Mrs S Collop, C J Crofts, I Devereux, P Gidney, G Hipperson, P Hodson, M Hopkins, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, Lord Howard, M Howland, G Howman, H Humphrey, C Joyce, P Kunes, A Lawrence, B Long, Mrs K Mellish, G Middleton, J Moriarty, A Morrison, Mrs E Nockolds, T Parish, M Peake, C Sampson, Miss S Sandell, Mrs V Spikings, Mrs S Squire, M Storey, M Taylor, T Tilbrook, A Tyler, D Tyler, Mrs E Watson, J Westrop, A White, Mrs M Wilkinson and Mrs S Young

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Beal, A Bubb, Mrs S Buck, Mrs J Collingham, Mrs S Fraser, R Groom, C Manning, G McGuinness, D Pope, P Rochford, M Shorting and D Whitby

C:57 **PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by Father Joshua Bell.

C:58 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C:59 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

The Mayor, Councillor N Daubney declared an historical prejudicial interest in the Notice of Motion regarding NWES and left the meeting during its consideration and when it was considered during Councillor Beales' report.

C:60 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had sent a letter of welcome to HM The Queen for her stay in Norfolk and had received a response.

C:61 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None

C:62 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Under Standing order 9, the Mayor invited the public questioners to put their questions:

1) Question from Mrs J Rust

Apart from spending money on events to bring people into the town, what steps are the council taking to encourage and support businesses to come to King's Lynn.

Councillor Long gave the following response: "Your question is interesting as it implies that everyone knows about the good work we do as a council with regards to Festivals and Events but do not know about what else we are doing so a quick run down of some of these:

- We give a Pro-active response to business enquiries/needs and help/advice with a dedicated Town Centre Manager and Business Development Officer
- This year around £1m in grants have been made to West Norfolk businesses following advice from the Council.
- We have Heritage Action Zone Status
- We have The Townscape Heritage Initiative and this has gained investment and works for example In St James Street.
- We are developing proposals for the waterfront including purchase of Summerfield and Thomas site, regenerating our town.
- Jointly with NCC we have an ongoing Transport study
- We Support the Business Improvement District.
- With our Support King's Lynn has won the Anglia in Bloom awards.
- We have agreed a Cinema proposal at the Corn Exchange and are working with the Majestic to retain cinema in the town centre.
- We are Building Homes for People to buy and to rent to support the town and those that want to live and work here.
- We have made Investment in the former Westgate/ Beales block to attract new retailers to the town.
- We are Working with local schools on educational standards, helping to improve our future workforce.
- We have a dedicated team who tidy up not just litter, they remove the chewing gum from the pavements we have a dedicated vehicle to deal with any graffiti, and gardeners that keep our parks and public space looking tidy and attractive.

- and finally we provide 24 hours a day 365 day a year CCTV coverage that helps to keep our town safe.

So it isn't all about Events and Festivals, those are supported and promoted in addition to everything else, we do things that many other larger towns and cities do not do.

The nature of retailing is evolving but local business needs local people to support it and I for one will continue to do so and I would urge others to do the same."

By way of supplementary Mrs Rust asked if the Council would be willing to offer £2.7m to businesses in the form of lower rent and business rates in line with what she considered the Council was willing to lose with NWES.

Councillor Long responded that the arrangement NWES was a loan, the Council had not lost it.

2) **Question from Ms B Barclay**

"What evidence and on what authority can it be claimed that the art collection for the proposed Guildhall art gallery, as supported by this council, is of national and international importance?"

Councillor Mrs Nockolds gave the following response: "The Council has not made any claims, nor given any comment about the standards of any specific art collection.

With regards to such an exhibition we would be guided by advice from the Arts Council and/or N.M.S., who are a National Portfolio Organisation supported by the Arts Council.

Exhibitions housed within any proposed gallery wherever it is, would be determined by the organisation operating the venue.

As a Council we place great importance and care for our Heritage in King's Lynn, which definitely includes the Guildhall. The Guildhall is a hall for hire. Many groups make use of the Complex, both professional and amateur groups. We want the public to enjoy and use all of the features of the Guildhall Complex, which is a beautiful area and one we are proud of. It is for this reason we are very pleased and excited to be working in partnership with a new Charity which is being established.

Our support has been for proposals to restore the fabric of St. George's Guildhall Complex, making it a venue for performances as well as one which could possibly involve the creation of a gallery of National and International significance with exhibitions.

The Council are still in negotiations as both the charity and the Council want the best for King's Lynn and West Norfolk as a whole."

By way of supplementary Ms Barclay asked how much the Council received from all sources relating to the Guildhall complex in the last accounting year.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds stated she was not able to give the exact figure, but any money would have come from the hiring of the Guildhall.

C:63 **CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**

i **Corporate Projects and Assets - Councillor A Beales**

Councillor Beales presented his report. In updating Council he drew attention to recent newspaper reporting on NWES, where a comment he had made had been badly misconstrued with no opportunity to comment on that. He drew Council's attention to the fact that Councillor Daubney had identified a need for a business centre in King's Lynn and driven the policy in a transparent manner to bring something forward, but he did not drive NWES's involvement and had absented himself from every part of the decisions relating to that.

He considered that the notice of motion featured later on the agenda was premature as he had earlier asked for an investigation to take place on the situation with the business centre, which was being undertaken by Internal Audit and would be reported to the Audit Committee in March which Members could attend. He considered that should the serious allegations levelled against past NWES management give rise to a wider enquiry into all aspects of NWES rather than the wholly appropriate enquiry into the KLIC situation, then of course this Council would cooperate fully.

In response to a question, Councillor Beales confirmed that the Marsh Lane orchard being renamed in memory of Alderman Jackson was still in train with facts and figures being checked before a planned ceremony.

Councillor Beales explained that H&M were contractually obliged to the new building in the Vancouver Centre, and meetings to check progress on site were being held. He also confirmed that it was hoped that the new H&M would increase footfall to the town.

Following a question on the ownership of the KLIC building, Councillor Beales confirmed that the Council now owned the building, with a few formalities to finalise. He confirmed that the Council was seeking to do what was best for the taxpayer. He confirmed that options for future management of the building were still open.

In response to a question on the development of land on the Hardwick industrial estate recently Councillor Beales confirmed the development was taking place by private developers, he also responded to a

question relating to antisocial behaviour in the bus station and reminded Members that it was a police matter.

Following a question relating to when the Cabinet Member was first made aware of the issue of the NWES property in France, Councillor Beales confirmed it was a serious allegation and that he was first made aware of it on reading it in the newspaper. It was suggested that the Council's representative raised concerns with NWES regarding the property, but not the Council.

At this point the Mayor, Councillor Daubney left the room during discussion on this matter. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Hipperson took the Chair.

In order for the discussion to continue on what would potentially include confidential information, Councillor Long proposed that the press and public be excluded for the discussion. This was seconded by Councillor Nockolds and agreed by Council. The labour group asked for their vote against the exclusion to be noted.

Exclusion of the 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Councillor Beales reminded members that his dealings with NWES related only to the KLIC, he made reference to the press reporting which had uncovered a number of issues.

A discussion ensued on Directors, and their appointment and NWES experience in the business advisory role and the current investigation taking place.

At this point the press and public were re-admitted to the meeting and the Mayor, Councillor Daubney returned to the Chair.

Councillor Beales answered further questions and undertook to ascertain who had responsibility for the video units in the bus station which held out of date information, and explained that the Council had opted to gift the land for the new North Lynn school, and was not seeking to exempt itself from educational contributions.

ii Development - Councillor R Blunt

Councillor Blunt presented his report. In response to questions raised on the meetings of the Local Plan Task Group Councillor Blunt explained that briefing sessions had been organised for the Task

Group to assist with their understanding of the forthcoming review documentation which contained potential sites being put forward. Following the point raised that a member was refused a copy of the draft documentation, it was confirmed that officers had offered to discuss the document with the Councillor. The publication of the Task Group papers within the 5 clear days timeframe was also discussed, to which it was advised that they were published as soon as practicable.

In response to points raised regarding officers advice to the Planning Committee, Councillor Blunt commented that decisions taken were for each Planning Committee Councillor to decide.

Councillor Blunt also responded to a question on the housing requirement figures and confirmed that the Government hadn't made any response and the figures were constantly changing. He confirmed that an Action Plan to work towards meeting the target was already underway.

iii **Housing and Community - Councillor A Lawrence**

Councillor Lawrence presented his report. He confirmed he would try to be in attendance for the public consultation event for the housing site in Hunstanton.

In giving information on the County Lines operation and objection to the reference to rented properties in his report, Councillor Lawrence agreed to withdraw the reference to "rented" and leave it as properties.

iv **Environment - Councillor I Devereux**

Councillor Devereux presented his report and explained that the Refuse and Recycling re tendering of the contract should reach fruition at the end of the year. He agreed to keep members updated.

In response to a question on fly tipping Councillor Devereux confirmed that the Council would not clear the fly tipping from private land, but would assist if possible with any investigation into the identity of a fly tipper with a view to fines or prosecution. He also urged the CLA and Police to be more involved in the process.

Councillor Devereux also responded to a comment made on litter bins being accessible, by explaining that without prior agreement, contractors were unable to cross private land to empty bins.

v **Facilities and IT - Councillor Mrs K Mellish**

Councillor Mrs Mellish presented her report. In relation to the large numbers of spam emails being received at the moment she encouraged members to delete any they were suspicious of or refer

them to the ICT helpdesk. In response to a question on live streaming of meetings Councillor Mrs Mellish commented that it was for members to decide.

vi **Performance - Councillor P Hodson**

Councillor Hodson presented his report. In response to a question on the improvement to the street lighting in the town centre, Councillor Hodson confirmed that he had raised the issue with the County Council, who had confirmed that it was already in their workplan.

He also undertook to provide for members the detail on numbers and costs for any extension to the pontoons using grant money when it was finalised.

vii **Deputy Leader and Culture, Heritage and Health - Councillor Mrs E Nockolds**

Councillor Mrs Nockolds presented her report and confirmed that the meeting with the Mart listed in her report was an operational meeting to ensure everything was agreed and lined up ready for their arrival.

In response to a question Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained the content of the Health and Wellbeing conference.

Following a question on the advertising of the Guildhall using a Shakespeare connection, Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that there was no evidence that he had definitely played there. She also drew attention to the fact that the National Trust, as owners of the building had never included it in their advertisement documentation.

viii **Leader and Resources - Councillor B Long**

Councillor Long presented his report. He confirmed that he had supported the attendance at Member Mart meetings by Councillor S and J Collop, but not operational ones.

Councillor Long, in making reference to the forthcoming budget confirmed that the Council had specifically planned for the reduction in RSG. He also responded that he did not believe the Council could levy interest on unpaid Council tax, but would inform members if it was possible.

C:64 **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

None

C:65 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i **Cabinet: 8 January 2019**

Councillor Long proposed the recommendations from the Cabinet on 8 January 2019. These were seconded by Councillor Mrs Nockolds.

The following recommendations were approved without debate:

CAB104: Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20 – Final Scheme

CAB108: Minor Amendments to Scheme of Delegation

CAB111: West Norfolk Property Ltd – Governance and Business Plan

In considering the recommendations under CAB109: Polling District and Place Review Councillor Howman raised his objections to the Springwood polling station proposal. Councillor Wilkinson raised the issue of the Minster Court changes which she was pleased with. Councillor Beales endorsed the views of the Returning Officer.

Councillor Long, in summing up reminded Members of the proximity of the polling stations in comparison with rural stations and the high turnout for the Springwood station. He reminded Members that the situation was being looked into for later elections.

With the required number of supporters, Councillor J Collop asked for a recorded vote on the item.

For	Against	Abstain
B Ayres	J Collop	R Bird
L Bambridge	S Collop	N Daubney
A Beales	G Howman	M Howland
C Bower	C Joyce	T Parish
R Blunt	J Moriarty	S Squire
M Chenery of Horsbrugh	A Tyler	
C Crofts	M Wilkinson	
I Devereux		
P Gidney		
G Hipperson		
P Hodson		
M Hopkins		
Lord Howard		
H Humphrey		
P Kunes		
A Lawrence		
B Long		
K Mellish		
G Middleton		
A Morrison		

E Nockolds		
M Peake		
C Sampson		
S Sandell		
V Spikings		
M Storey		
M Taylor		
T Tilbrook		
D Tyler		
E Watson		
J Westrop		
A White		
S Young		
33	7	5

The recommendation in CAB109: Polling District Place Review was approved.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations from Cabinet on 8 January 2019 be approved.

C:66 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES - KING'S LYNN CONSERVANCY BOARD**

Council was invited to nominate two representatives to sit on the King's Lynn Conservancy Board for a 3 year period.

Councillor Long nominated Councillors B Ayres, C Sampson, this was seconded by Councillor Mrs Nockolds and put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That Councillors B Ayres and C Sampson be nominated to the King's Lynn Conservancy Board.

C:67 **POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES**

Council received a report which explained that despite booking Polling Stations some time ago, Brancaster Village Hall may no longer be available for use as a Polling Station for the Borough and Parish Council Elections on 2 May 2019.

Council was asked to endorse the amendment to the relevant page of the Polling District Schedule, so far as the area of the Polling Place was concerned. This would enable the Returning Officer to use the Village Hall, Main Road, Brancaster Staithe as the Polling Station for both wards of Brancaster Parish and the Parish of Titchwell.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Long, seconded by Councillor Mrs Nockolds and put to the vote.

RESOLVED: That the amendment to the schedule be approved.

C:68

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Mayor left the meeting during consideration of the item, the Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

Councillor C E Joyce proposed his Notice of Motion (1/19), this was seconded by Councillor Bird who reserved the right to speak.

“That this Council establish an independent inquiry into the partnership of Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services, and its subsidiary companies, regarding the award of, administration of and financial relationship with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

To ensure the impartiality and independence of the inquiry the chair and personnel of such an inquiry be chosen by an outside body, notably the Local Government Association to report back to the Full Council no later than 28th February 2019.

The independent inquiry will have full access to all council documents associated with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services and its subsidiary companies”

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Joyce drew attention to the national media coverage of the NWES situation and that of the property in the south of France, he considered that the reputation of the Council was on the line because of their dealings with NWES. He asked what due diligence had been done on the company, did the contract go out to tender and were members aware of the failure of NWES to find the money to repay the loan. He stated that taxpayers wanted to know what had happened to the money. He considered that members should have a free vote on this matter and the matter should not be passed to Cabinet.

Councillor Long reminded Members that the Council's only dealings with NWES was with regard to the KLIC and the business advice given with EU funding, not its other business activities. He explained that the Internal Auditors were currently carrying out a review of the Council's situation under its procedures. He considered that any investigation of NWES itself was for others to carry out.

Under Standing Order 14.6 Councillor Long proposed that the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration of the type of enquiry to be recommended. Councillor Nockolds seconded the proposal.

In debating the proposal Councillor Moriarty encouraged Members to vote against the proposal and permit an independent inquiry. He requested a recorded vote on the decision to refer the matter to Cabinet.

Councillor Joyce urged members to vote down the referral to cabinet in order to permit the independent review.

Councillor Beales reminded Members that until it was known what the situation was it was premature to refer the issue for an outside investigation and the referral to Cabinet did not preclude a further enquiry at a later date, or any wider investigation into NWES.

Under Standing Order 15.18a, Councillor Long moved that the question be put.

With the required number of supporters, Councillor Moriarty asked for a recorded vote on the item.

For	Against	Abstain
B Ayres	R Bird	G Hipperson
L Bambridge	J Collop	
A Beales	S Collop	
C Bower	G Howman	
R Blunt	M Howland	
M Chenery of Horsbrugh	C Joyce	
C Crofts	J Moriarty	
I Devereux	T Parish	
P Gidney	S Squire	
P Hodson	A Tyler	
M Hopkins	M Wilkinson	
H Humphrey		
P Kunes		
A Lawrence		
B Long		
K Mellish		
G Middleton		
A Morrison		
E Nockolds		
M Peake		
C Sampson		
S Sandell		
V Spikings		
M Storey		
M Taylor		
T Tilbrook		
D Tyler		
E Watson		
J Westrop		
A White		
S Young		
31	11	1

The vote was carried.

RESOLVED: That the matter be referred to cabinet for consideration.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm