

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Tuesday, 7th June, 2022 at 4.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors C Sampson (Chair), C Bower, A Bubb, S Collop, I Devereux, C Hudson (substitute for M Wilkinson), J Lowe, J Moriarty (substitute for A Bullen), E Nockolds (substitute for J Kirk), T Parish (substitute for M de Whalley and S Squire

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor B Long – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Councillor P Kunes – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillors Kemp and de Whalley (remotely)

OFFICERS:

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director

Nikki Patton – Housing Strategy Officer

Debbie Ess – Corporate Performance Officer

Dave Robson – Environmental Health Manager

Fabia Pollard – Scientific Officer

BY INVITATION: Matthew Philpot and Cathryn Brady from the Water Management Alliance.

EC1: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

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RESOLVED: That Councillor Bower be appointed as Vice Chair for the Municipal Year.

EC2: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bullen, Kirk, de Whalley and Wilkinson.

EC3: MINUTES

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

EC4: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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Councillors Nockolds, Sampson and Bubb declared an interest in Item EC8 as Members of Internal Drainage Boards.

EC5: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC6: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillors Kemp and de Whalley (remotely).

EC7: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair explained that he had received correspondence which he would raise under EC14: Portfolio Holder Question and Answer Session.

EC8: **PRESENTATION FROM THE WATER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE**

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Cathryn Brady, Sustainable Development Manager and Matthew Philpot, Area Manager from the Water Management Alliance were present remotely at the meeting and provided the Panel with information on the role of the Internal Drainage Board, the Services provided by the Water Management Alliance, risk management and maintenance.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Parish made reference to the cost of Internal Drainage Boards to the taxpayer and felt that they should be funded by Central Government rather than local taxation. He also made reference to rising energy costs and Matthew Philpott explained that a percentage increase in utility costs had been budgeted for and there were reserve funds available. He also commented that the Water Management Alliance were accountable locally through interaction with Councillors on the Board.

Councillor Moriarty asked questions about pumping stations generating their own electricity, accountability, excluded areas because of height and he hoped that the Internal Drainage Boards were lobbying Government to become Statutory Consultees. Cathryn Brady commented that she felt the Water Management Alliance had a good relationship with the Borough Council and the Lead Flood Authority and commented on Planning Applications as appropriate. Reference was

made to the Environment Act which opened the potential to extend to areas which had previously been excluded because of height. With regard to generation of electricity it was explained that new infrastructure was much more efficient.

In response to questions from Councillor Squire, it was explained that guidelines limited when certain activities and maintenance could take place due to the impact on the environment and wildlife and the Environment Act included a duty to improve habitats. The Internal Drainage Board worked closely with landowners and enforcement options were available as a last resort if required.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and asked how climate change was being dealt. Matthew Philpot explained that contingencies were being built into new stations to deal with climate change.

Councillor de Whalley addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and referred to the maintenance of wetland areas and supporting cycleways along access routes. Cathryn Brady explained that Water Management Alliance were not always the landowner of access routes, but would consider any proposals put forward as appropriate. Information was available on the Water Management Alliance of previous environmental projects that they had been involved with.

Councillor Nockolds reminded those present that Internal Drainage Board meetings were public meetings, and it would be good to have greater public engagement and greater presence on social media. Matthew Philpot explained that ways to expand their social media presence was being investigated.

Councillor Nockolds referred to the good community engagement work which had been carried out at the Islington Station.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the information.

EC9: **MINOR AMENDMENT TO THE HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING DELIVERY TASK GROUP'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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The Housing Strategy Officer outlined the proposed minor amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group as included in the Agenda which had been identified following an Internal Audit.

The Panel discussed the proposed amendments as set out in the Agenda.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and asked if the Task Group could consider including Housing Standards in their Terms of Reference in the future.

Councillor Collop, Chair of the Task Group commented that she hoped that the Task Group would meet regularly in the future.

RESOLVED: The amended Terms of Reference were approved by the Panel.

EC10: **2021-22 REVIEW OF THE COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME**

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The Corporate Performance Officer presented the report which provided an overview of how the funding had supported projects, events and initiatives within the local community.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Performance Officer for her report and invited feedback from the Panel.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that she felt the scheme was very good and was glad it would be continuing.

Councillor Bubb asked if Parishes that did not set a precept could be exempt from the rules to apply for funding and the Panel agreed that this would be beneficial.

Councillor Moriarty asked for information on the unsuccessful applications and the criteria and highlighted the lack of approved projects linked to environment and tackling climate change. He suggested that to encourage applications in relation to this subject area that the grant be increased by 10% for these specific projects. The Corporate Performance Officer explained that there were nine applications which were unsuccessful and many of these were because of oversubscription. The unsuccessful applicants had been advised to reapply in the next round of funding.

Councillor Nockolds made reference to the paperwork, which contained the signature of the Leader of the Council and asked if this could include the Ward Councillors signature as the one who had provided the grant.

RESOLVED: That the feedback from the Panel above be taken into consideration as appropriate.

EC11: **CABINET REPORT - CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY**

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The Environmental Health Manager and Scientific Officer presented the Cabinet Report which updated the Contaminated Land Strategy.

The Chair thanked the Environmental Health Manager for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to questions from Councillor Devereux relating to mineral extractions, the Environmental Health Manager explained that Norfolk County Council were the lead authority on planning applications for mineral extraction sites with the Borough Council acting as a consultee. It was also explained that many of the contaminated sites were historical as newer sites were subject to restoration plans as part of their planning permission.

In response to a question from Councillor Squire, it was explained that high risk areas were targeted and all sites were considered in a priority order. Future risks were also considered and sites could be kept under review.

Councillor Parish referred to arsenic and the Scientific Officer explained that national background levels had been established.

In response to a question from Councillor Bubb it was explained that a programmed schedule of inspections were carried out and additional work was carried out where spills or complaints had been reported.

The Scientific Officer explained that technology was used to vent gases from site.

RESOLVED: That the Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

Cabinet Recommendation: Adopt the updated Contaminated Land Strategy.

EC12: **NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES WHICH FALL WITHIN THE PANELS REMIT**

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The Panel was invited to nominate Members to serve on outside bodies which fell under the remit of the Environment and Community Panel. The nominations would be presented to the Full Council meeting in July for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Panel nominate Members to serve on the Outside Bodies as set out below.

1. Borough Council/College of West Anglia Liaison Committee – Councillor Lowe
2. King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee – Councillors de Whalley, Bubb and Kemp
3. King's Lynn Football Club Board – Paul Bland
4. Norfolk County Council – Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Panel – Councillors Kemp and Hudson (sub)
5. Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillors Kemp and de Whalley (sub)
6. West Norfolk Community Transport Project – Councillor Nockolds

EC13: **MEMBERSHIPS OF TASK GROUPS AND INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS**

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The Panel were invited to arrange for the appointment of Members to serve on Informal Working Groups and Task Groups which have previously been established by the Panel for the current municipal year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group continue to operate and the Democratic Services Officer contact Group Leaders to seek Membership of the Group.
2. That the following Informal Working Groups continue to operate with the same Membership:
 - Single Use Plastics Informal Working Group
 - Climate Change Informal Working Group – with the addition of Councillor Moriarty.
 - Urban Wildlife Informal Working Group

EC14: **PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

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Councillor Squire asked Councillor Kunes for information on Coastal Protection Measures. Councillor Kunes stated that the current position was to hold the line and asked for more information from Councillor Squire on her queries and he would respond via email.

Councillor Bubb commented that there was a lot of litter along the A149. It was explained that risk assessments for high speed roads were currently being undertaken to ensure that litter could be collected safely. Councillor Long commented that people could report and provide evidence of people dropping litter and the Council did have enforcement powers. Publicising how the public could report issues would also be looked at.

Councillor de Whalley asked for information on contractor responsibilities to care for and replace damaged, dead or missing whips and statistics on the percentage of trees at Lynnsport and King's

Reach that had survived. Councillor Kunes explained that he did not have statistics, but the majority had survived. He also outlined the contractor responsibilities.

The Chair explained that he had received correspondence from a resident asking for confirmation of more effective care and maintenance of new tree planting.

Councillor Moriarty raised an issue relating to the changing of bin collection dates by the contractors, which conflicted with the information that Borough Councillors had been provided with to share with their residents. Councillor Long set out details of the contract negotiations and the reasons why collection dates had changed, which was usually to ensure a more efficient route.

In response to a question from Councillor Hudson, it was confirmed that collection information was available on the Borough Councils website.

EC15: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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Councillor Collop asked when Gayton Road Cemetery would come to the Panel. The Assistant Director explained that any operational issues should be reported to officers in the meantime.

Councillor Devereux explained that he had passed the Chair information on the launch of the roadmap for the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England.

Councillor Moriarty referred to the Cabinet Forward Decisions List and was advised that a Special Regeneration and Development Panel meeting had been arranged for 23rd June 2022 to consider the Levelling up fund and the Freedom of the Borough Report as a result of work carried out by the Corporate Performance Panel.

Councillor Nockolds suggested that a Tourism update be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC16: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on 19th July 2022 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm