

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel held on Wednesday, 19th October, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillors P Gidney (Chairman),
Miss L Bambridge, Mrs J Collingham, I Gourlay, M Chenery of Horsbrugh,
M Howland, P Kunes, P Rochford, Mrs V Spikings and Mrs E Watson.

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor A Beales - Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Industrial Assets
Councillor R Blunt - Portfolio Holder for Development
Councillor B Long - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health.

By Invitation:

Richard Morrish – Richard Morrish Associates
Andrew Thorpe – Norfolk County Council

Officers:

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director
Mark Fuller – Principal Project Surveyor
Alan Gomm – LDF Manager
Lorraine Gore – Assistant Director
Matthew Henry – Property Services Manager

RD55: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Crofts.

RD56: MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes from the Regeneration and Development Panel meeting held on 30th August 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RD57: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bambridge – RD65: A letter had been circulated to the Panel from St Margaret's and St Nicholas Forum of which she was a Member.

RD58: URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

RD59: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillor Bubb – RD61 to RD68
Councillor Pope – RD61 to RD68.

RD60: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman had received correspondence from Mike Barker, thanking him for the opportunity to come and speak to Members about the essential benefits of trees.

The Chairman had responded to the email and thanked Mike Barker for his presentation.

RD61: A TREE STRATEGY FOR WEST NORFOLK

The Chairman explained that he had added this item onto the Agenda following discussions with Members of the Green Infrastructure Co-ordination Group and had invited Rick Morrish to the meeting to provide detail on how a Tree Strategy for West Norfolk could be put in place.

The Chairman welcomed Richard Morrish to the Meeting. Richard Morrish explained that he was a Landscape Architect, Member of the Civic Society and sat on the Green Infrastructure Co-ordination Group.

Richard Morrish circulated his review of the existing Borough Council Policies relating to Green Infrastructure and Trees and how he thought they could be improved. He felt that a clear strategy for trees was the missing link. He explained that there was a tree crisis with some species being lost to diseases and provided detail of other environmental factors which had an impact on trees. He also acknowledged that resources and funding for Local Government were stretched already.

Councillor Mrs Spikings commented that she did not feel that this was the right way to have this dialogue and perhaps this matter, in its initial stages, should be discussed by the Local Plan Task Group, the relevant Portfolio Holder and officers. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies had been found Sound by the Inspector.

Richard Morrish felt that the Council's vision needed to be clearer in relation to Green Infrastructure. He commented that a simple goal or pledge should be introduced, such as, increasing the amount of trees in the Borough by 10% by 2026. Richard Morrish commented that he would be available to assist the Council, if required, to develop a Tree

Strategy and would do so on a voluntary basis, as he felt that this was a very important issue in the Borough.

The Chairman thanked Richard Morrish for attending the meeting and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to a question, Richard Morrish explained that surveys would have to be undertaken to ascertain how many trees there were in the Borough so that the 10% increase could be calculated. The Executive Director explained that the Borough Council had an Arboriculturalist Officer who inspected trees on a regular basis and maintained a tree register.

Reference was made to the historic nature of King's Lynn and the mediaeval drains and tunnels which ran under the town centre. Richard Morrish acknowledged that some Conservation Areas may not be suitable and planting would need to be targeted.

Comments were made relating to areas around the Hardwick Industrial Estate and how tree planting was not appropriate in some areas because of highways safety and visibility.

Councillor Mrs Spikings explained that she was the Chairman of the Planning Committee and felt that it was unfair to say that the Council did not have enough regard to trees. She explained that the Planning Committee took a serious view on applications which would involve tree felling and had refused some applications on this basis when they felt that it was important for trees to be retained. They also added conditions on Planning Permissions where they felt that the retention of trees or additional tree planting was important. She also stated that the Borough Council did have an Arboriculturalist Officer.

Councillor Mrs Spikings asked who would be paying for all the additional trees which Richard Morrish had suggested were required. She also referred to the long term and the more frequent diseases which were affecting trees. Richard Morrish acknowledged that the Policy needed to be realistic with regards to finances available. Councillor Mrs Spikings reminded those present that everyone had had the opportunity to comment on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies during the public consultation exercises and she asked if Richard Morrish had made representations.

In response to a question regarding Hunstanton, the Executive Director explained that there had been issues with contamination in one of the Car Parks in Hunstanton, which meant that trees had not grown. However there were other areas in Hunstanton such as Oasis Way and Southend Road, where long budded Poplars had been planted. The Executive Director stated that the Council did look at landscaping and tree planting but there was only so much resource available.

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environment addressed the Panel. He appreciated that Richard Morrish had attended the meeting and commented that in an ideal world the Council would plant as many trees as possible, however resources were limited and would decrease further in the future. Consideration needed to be given to the additional liability of maintenance on the Borough. He explained that the Inspector had found the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies sound and Green Infrastructure provision was included in this. He also reiterated comments that the Planning Committee carefully considered implications for trees and added conditions to permissions or sought developer contributions where appropriate.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Long for summarising the Council's position and felt that further discussions were required to pull together a Tree Strategy. He hoped that all information the Borough held on trees could be pulled together and made available on the website. Councillor Spikings commented that a lot of information was already available on the website. The Chairman acknowledged that information was already available on the website, but hoped that, in the future this could possibly be developed further to incorporate things such as detail on Tree Preservation Orders, advice for residents and developers, planting programmes and links to articles which could be of interest.

RD62: **FEEDBACK FROM THE TALK ON THE ESSENTIAL BENEFITS OF TREES.**

The Chairman reminded those present that he had arranged a talk on the essential benefits of trees which Members, officers and Parish Councillors had been invited to attend. The Chairman invited feedback from the Panel.

The general consensus of the Panel was that the presentation was poor and did not benefit Members. The Panel acknowledged the importance of trees, but felt that the presentation did not serve a purpose and it was noted that the presentation had been provided by a Commercial business.

The Vice Chairman commented that the Panel should concentrate on issues that they could influence and policy development.

The Chairman accepted the comments of the Panel and explained that he felt trees were an important topic and he could look at different ways of working in the future.

Councillor Mrs Spikings, in her capacity as Chairman of the Planning Committee, suggested that consideration be given to linking with Planning Committee training. She explained that the Planning Committee regularly received training from officers which was very

useful. If the training related to the work of the Regeneration and Development Panel as well, they could be invited to attend.

The Leader of the Council commented that he welcomed that the Chairman was being proactive and looking at taking the Panel in a different direction, however, there needed to be a worthwhile outcome. He felt that discussions had been useful and tree planting would be looked at in new developments. He explained that the Green Infrastructure Coordination Group would be taking forward the Green Infrastructure Policy.

RD63: **LEADER PROGRAMME UPDATE - PRESENTATION FROM NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

Andrew Thorpe from Norfolk County Council was present at the meeting. He reminded the Panel that representatives from Norfolk County Council had attended the meeting a year ago to provide an update on the Rural Development Strategy and Leader Funding. Andrew Thorpe provided an update on the work of the Leader Programme as attached.

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

Andrew Thorpe responded to questions and explained that some of the individuals involved in the project were social services referrals or job centre referrals. He explained that they were not paid employees, but the opportunity could enhance their chances of moving onto employment.

He explained that once the UK left the European Union, other sources of funding would need to be looked at. He confirmed that all projects which had been contracted before the UK left the EU would be safe until the end of the project.

Andrew Thorpe confirmed that the Funding was available to Charities, not for profit organisations and social enterprises.

The Panel was informed that stringent checks were carried out before any funding was awarded. The organisation had to prove a need and prove that the project was sustainable. Cash flow projections were required and it was confirmed that some applications had been rejected as they could not satisfy that there was a real demand for the project or that it would be sustainable.

The Chairman thanked Andrew Thorpe for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: The update was noted.

RD64: **PRINCIPLE BEHIND THE CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Assistant Director presented the Panel with information on the Capital and Investment Strategy. A copy of the Assistant Director's presentation is attached and the following points were highlighted:

- The last review was carried out in 2009.
- It was hoped that the revised strategy would afford more flexibility.
- The Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in January 2017 and any comments received by the Panel would be incorporated into the Cabinet report.

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

Investment in the local area was supported and it was requested that consideration be given to the rural areas. Investments should not just focus on the Town Centres of King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton, but also in the wider rural areas.

The Assistant Director explained that the Council had funds invested in assets already. The intention was to look at funds which were currently invested in traditional counterparties. She explained that investment opportunities would only be looked at if they fitted in with the Council's Corporate Priorities and were advantageous to the Council.

The Leader of the Council explained that the investments in banks were earning little interest and if there was an opportunity to yield more it should be considered.

The Assistant Director confirmed that if the Panel would like to make any further comment on the Policy that they could email her.

RESOLVED: The comments of the Panel would be taken into consideration.

RD65: **ST GEORGE'S GUILDHALL COMPLEX**

The Panel received a report which detailed progress with proposals for the St George's Guildhall Complex and the submission of a grant to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Executive Director reminded the Panel that they had received information on the project and this was an update before the Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 1 application was submitted. He explained that since their last update a consultation exercise had been carried out, the results of which had been included in the agenda. He highlighted that there had been some negative responses to the consultation, predominantly relating to the seating numbers for the Guildhall. The Executive Director explained that meetings had been held with representatives from the main user groups which had been beneficial

in setting out proposed options for seating arrangements. The favoured option which was being looked at was to have half of the auditorium as fixed tiered seating and half with removable seating. This option would provide the seating capacity requested by the user groups as well as the flexibility to offer different seating arrangements for smaller performances. The flat floor area would give much greater flexibility in use of the Guildhall particularly for daytime activities.

The Executive Director referred to the report which provided details of previous studies on the Arts Centre over the last 17 years. He explained that it was unnecessary to bring in more consultants to carry out work which had already been done, so elements of previous studies had been incorporated into the scheme.

The Principal Project Surveyor provided the Panel with details of the project and proposed plans. He explained that an initial project enquiry had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and favourable feedback had been received. Historic England had also been consulted on the project. The Panel was informed that the project included installation of a lift and a glass structure to link all of the spaces. Options for the White Barn would also be looked at, although this was outside of the Heritage Lottery Fund application.

The Principal Project Surveyor explained that the next steps would be for the Project Team to work up the proposals and the Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund Bid. It was hoped that the Bid would be submitted by the November deadline and if successful delivery of the project could commence in early 2019. The Panel was informed that it was important that the Bid was of a high standard and included all the necessary detail. If it was not possible to pull all of the information together by the Heritage Lottery Fund deadline it would have slip to the next deadline.

The Executive Director explained that officers had met with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Heritage England and received positive feedback. Architects had also met with the Quality Surveyors and estimated costs drawn up. An estimated cost of £3m for the Capital works of the project had been calculated. The activity plan cost would be approximately £300,000. Work was still ongoing on costs as the cost of the project currently exceeded the regional grant threshold. Other funding streams were also being investigated, such as Arts Council Lottery Funding, as some of the project costs were directly related to the Arts, for example lighting and sound equipment.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health addressed the Panel. She explained that a lot of public consultation had been carried out, which was important. Lots of information was made available at Heritage Open Day and views of visitors and residents had been obtained. Lots of respondents said that it was important to conserve the Heritage of the buildings. The Portfolio Holder explained that some areas were unused a lot of the time at the moment in the evenings and

user groups had requested that adequate seating be provided. The option being considered for seating provided a lot of flexibility and would hopefully result in increased use.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health informed the Panel that further meetings would be held with the main user groups so that they were kept informed of progress and their views taken into consideration. She explained that the building was likely to require repair works in the future and without external funding support, the Council would have to bear all of the costs.

The Panel made the following comments on the proposals:

- It was good to see the lift included in the proposals, which would improve access and hopefully result in more people using the facility.
- Correspondence had been sent to all Members of the Panel relating to the Guildhall and the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health confirmed that she had responded to the correspondence and further consultation was taking place.
- A strong Marketing Strategy would be required and the Executive Director explained that the Heritage Lottery Fund, after being made aware of the history of the site, had requested a strong Stage 1 Business Case and wanted to see lots of evidence. The Executive Director explained that this was why it was crucial to get the Bid correct and if necessary delay submission.
- A Designated Arts Officer may need to be considered.
- There was lots of local people with local expertise and their input needed to be taken on board when it came to future programming.
- Access to the Fermoy Gallery needed to be improved, as well as security and humidity, and then it may be possible to attract more touring exhibitions.
- Consideration needed to be given to access to people with disabilities. Councillor Bubb addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and explained that he was Chairman of the West Norfolk Disability Forum who could be involved in the project to ensure that it was all accessible to people with disabilities.
- Details of the closure whilst the work was ongoing would be provided in the Stage 2 bid. There could be implications for the commercial businesses on the site and these would have to be investigated. Work was ongoing with Alive Leisure and Creative Arts England to ensure that there was a continuous arts offer during the closure period.
- The idea of the glass roof was good and it was important to create a comprehensive area and linked up spaces.
- The Interpretation Boards were welcomed as they would provide information on the history of the building.
- The Panel hoped that the bid would be submitted by the November deadline as they all felt that it was important that there were no delays.
- Decent toilets were requested and it was confirmed that these did form part of the project.
- The main priority should be protecting the heritage of the building. Secondly the priority should be to ensure that the site was commercially viable to reduce Council subsidy.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health informed the Panel that consultation with interested parties was vital and reminded those present that the Guildhall was a Grade 1 Listed Building. Work with hirers would continue as it was important that the Arts Centre was fully utilised by local people. She referred to the decreasing budgets available to the Council and explained that the building needed to be commercially viable. It was also important that the space was flexible and accessible. The Panel was also informed that visitors came to the King's Lynn Festival from all over the world.

RESOLVED: The comments of the Panel were noted.

RD66: **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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RD67: **EXEMPT - ASSET MANAGEMENT - COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT SITES**

The Panel received a report from the Property Services Manager on proposals for development sites owned by the Borough Council together with options for the Cabinet to consider.

The Cabinet report and covering Panel report had been included in the Agenda. The Property Services Manager explained that this report linked in with the Capital and Investment Strategy which the Panel received information on earlier in the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Property Services Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

- It was important to be proactive and not miss opportunities because of the sometimes slow Democratic process.
- More information how the changes would fit in with the Democratic process would be required.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet be informed that the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as set out in the report.

RD68: **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel discussed the items which had been considered at this evening's meeting. It was requested that the Panel focus on Policy Development and things that they could influence, rather than receiving presentations and reports to note which could take up a lot of time at the meeting.

The Panel discussed the items on the Work Programme for the next meeting and it was suggested that items which were for noting purposes be removed and just a couple of items be considered at each meeting so that the Panel could have a detailed debate and make valuable contributions.

Items which were just for noting purposes could be presented to Members via other means, such as a pre-council briefing or an item in the Members Bulletin.

Members of the Panel were reminded that there was an eform 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: (i) The Panel's Work Programme was noted.
(ii) Items to be considered at future meetings be determined on how the Panel could have valuable input and how the Panel could assist in Policy Development.
(iii) The amount of items on the Agenda which were just for noting purposes be reduced.
(iv) That an item be added to the Agenda for the next meeting on the structure of the meetings and items for consideration.

RD69: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 30 November 2016 at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, Kings Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm