

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

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Wednesday, 23rd November, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Sampson (Chairman),  
Miss L Bambridge, A Bubb, Mrs S Collop, C J Crofts (substitute for Mrs C Bower), Mrs S Fraser, G Hipperson, M Hopkins, J Moriarty, P Rochford, T Smith and A Tyler

**Portfolio Holders**

Councillor A Lawrence - Portfolio Holder for Community and Housing  
Councillor B Long - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environment  
Councillor Mrs K Mellish - Portfolio Holder for Shared Services and Human Resources  
Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health

**Officers:**

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director, Commercial Services  
Martin Chisholm – Business Manager  
John Gilbraith – Licensing Manager  
Honor Howell – Assistant Director  
John Hussey – Operations Manager  
Nathan Johnson – Public Open Space Manager

**By Invitation:**

Paul Bland – Borough Council representative on King's Lynn Football Club Board

EC47: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor Bower.

EC48: **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes from the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EC49: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

EC50: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**EC51: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor D Tyler – EC55  
Councillor J Collop – EC56  
Councillor D Pope – EC53, EC54 and EC56.

**EC52: CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

**EC53: UPDATE FROM THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON KING'S LYNN FOOTBALL CLUB BOARD**

The Chairman welcomed Paul Bland, the Borough Council's representative on King's Lynn Football Club to the meeting.

Paul Bland provided the Panel with an update. He explained that the Football Club had been sold to a new owner earlier in the year and new arrangements were working well. The club had expanded and now had a reserve team, under 18's and a ladies team.

He felt that the first team were doing well, despite suspensions and injuries. Paul Bland commented that the new owner was very ambitious and would be working to bring in new players, establish academies and bring in younger players for youth teams.

The Chairman thanked Paul Bland for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to questions, Paul Bland explained that gate sales had increased since last year and the income from the gate sales and sponsorship was very important for the club. New booking systems had been introduced and customers could now book and pay online. The more successful the team was, the more it was likely that gate sales would increase.

Reference was made to the Football Club Car Park and Paul Bland acknowledged that the car park was not in a good condition. He explained that the car park was not locked and often resident's vehicles were parked in the car park. He commented that if the car park was locked when there was not a match, this would result in more cars parking on the side of the road. He explained that the Football Club had been in contact with the Council regarding the future of the car park and discussions were ongoing.

Councillor Pope addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He referred to the potential expansion of the club in establishing youth teams and he asked where they would play their matches. Paul Bland explained that he would meet with the Borough Council at the

appropriate time to see if there was anywhere available that the youth teams could use. Paul Bland stated that it was important to encourage young people and provide local facilities which they could use.

In response to further questions from Councillor Pope, Paul Bland explained that the Football Club was owned by an individual and the Board was made up of himself and the owner of the Football Club. The Football Club was a private business.

Councillor Pope stated that he did not think the Borough Council should pay for any work to the Car Park at the Football Club and Paul Bland replied that the Football Club was in liaison with the Borough Council as the Council was their Landlord and they would just be looking at options for the future at this stage.

Paul Bland informed the Panel that the food offer at the Football Club had improved significantly and people now came for a three course meal which was a real bonus for the club.

The Leader of the Council thanked Paul Bland for attending the meeting and explained that financial information was available in the Borough Council's accounts, but the financial affairs of the Football Club, which was a private commercial business, would not be available to the Council. He explained that the Borough Council had a representative on King's Lynn Football Club Board to represent the Council's interest as landlord. He explained that the Council carried out maintenance and repairs as appropriate as the owner of the building and within the terms of the lease. He explained that this was why it was important for the Football Club and Council to work together to discuss options for the future of the car park.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith, Paul Bland hoped that in the future the offer could be extended to under 12's, girls and boys teams. He explained that work was already carried out with schools.

It was confirmed that the relationship between the Council and the Football Club was that the Borough Council was the landlord and the Football Club were the tenants.

Councillor Moriarty queried why the Football Board was only made up of two people and he suggested that Paul Bland research his responsibilities and liabilities.

Paul Bland stated that he was the Borough Council's representative and therefore would report to the Borough Council any issues. He confirmed that he was not a Shareholder. He confirmed that he had been appointed to the Football Club Board since approximately 2010.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel noted the update.

**EC54: PARKING ISSUES - QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

The Business Manager had been invited to the meeting to respond to questions from the Panel regarding parking issues. Questions and responses are summarised below.

Councillor Bubb asked if the Council were able to mark divisions in the on street parking bays. He provided a photograph of where a vehicle had parked in the middle of the bays. The Business Manager explained that there could be less space if the bays were marked as bays would have to be marked out to the maximum length, whereas some cars were smaller than the maximum. The issue could be raised with Norfolk County Council if required as the area in question was currently not subject to a traffic regulation order for lineage.

Councillor Bubb also displayed photos relating to the pavements at the pedestrian entrance to the Cattle Market Car Park. He explained that the West Norfolk Disability Forum had raised issues regarding problems with the pavement being cracked and unstable, but they were yet to be resolved. The Business Manager asked that, if anyone was aware of pavement issues etc., which could cause imminent danger, they should report them immediately so that they could be investigated. The Business Manager explained that investigations were ongoing at the bus station regarding problem areas and some areas currently had barriers round them where there was a hazard yet to be repaired.

Councillor Bubb asked if an update was available on improvements to lighting at the taxi rank at the Cattle Market. He also asked if seating could be installed near the taxi rank and asked how much the cycle rack had cost in the Cattle Market Car Park. The Business Manager responded by asking for suggestions on where Councillor Bubb felt it would be appropriate to locate seating near the taxi rank, given the traffic movement in the area. He confirmed that the cycle racks had cost approximately £6,000 and were included as part of the redevelopment of the bus station and he felt that they were well used. Councillor Mrs Collop commented that the cycle rack was a two tier rack and she would find it difficult to mount her bicycle on the top rack. The Business Manager explained that both racks were well used and the top rack was often preferred by commuters, who left their bicycles for longer periods of time. The Business Manager commented that there were also bicycle racks and lockers available at the multi storey car park. Councillor Bubb was informed that the lighting at the Cattle Market was currently being looked at. A technical specification was being put together prior to going out for tender.

Councillor Smith asked if there was anything that could be done about parking problems in areas where a provided car park was small, for example small local convenience stores. The Business Manager explained that sometimes there was an overspill issue with small car parks adjoining small convenience stores, but contrary to popular belief

parked cars on the side of the road often slowed vehicles down which could be beneficial to pedestrians in the area. He explained that Norfolk County Council would have to make the decision as to if a specific area should be subject to a traffic regulation order.

Councillor Hipperson referred to on street parking issues in Marham, near the main gate to the RAF base. The Business Manager explained that there were no restrictions on the carriageway and the Borough Council could only enforce existing restrictions, again the area would require a traffic regulation order to apply restrictions and this would be a Norfolk County Council decision.

In response to a question regarding how close to a junctions cars were allowed to park, the Business Manager explained that there was no legal requirement on distance in the Highway Code, however consideration needed to be given to safety and line markings on the road. Action against dangerous parking would be the responsibility of the Police.

Councillor Rochford asked about car parking capacity and the Business Manager explained that car parks were rarely at capacity. Long term central car parks were well subscribed and car park usage was monitored. Car parking in the lead up to Christmas was often busy, as would be expected. In response to a further question regarding the smart pay technology, the Business Manager explained that this was still in progress. The current supplier did not yet provide an App, which it was felt would be the most convenient way for people to pay and also different tariffs were unavailable via smart pay, so alternative options were being considered. The Business Manager explained that the facility would be rolled out in due course.

With regards to the cycle network in King's Lynn and vehicles parked blocking cycle lanes, the Business Manager explained that the Council could only carry out enforcement on adopted cycle paths, which were the ones with a blue disc and solid white line, which meant that they were covered by a traffic regulation order. Councillor Hopkins referred to the cycle path along Morstons Drift, which was often blocked by vehicles and the Business Manager explained that this cycle path had only recently been adopted, and therefore enforcement action could be carried out in the future.

The Business Manager explained that if Members were aware of real time or ongoing issues with car parking they should contact [parking.operations@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:parking.operations@west-norfolk.gov.uk) resources could then be diverted to the area in question, if appropriate.

EC55: **REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS**

The Licensing Manager presented the report to Cabinet which proposed amendments to the Borough Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions.

The Licensing Manager outlined the proposed changes as contained in his report which included introducing a section on safeguarding to the Council's knowledge test, changes to the providers who taxi drivers could undertake the DSA Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Test Assessment with, removal of the condition relating to window tints, and the necessity for MOT's and Council's Compliance Test.

The Licensing Manager informed the Panel that the Council had offered Safeguarding Awareness Workshops to all Taxi and Private Hire drivers and 88% of the trade had attended, on a voluntary basis, one of the sessions offered. The Licensing Manager explained that the adoption of the new proposals would enable action to be taken against the 12% who had not yet attended a session to ensure that all drivers have completed the training.

The Licensing Manager highlighted Appendix 1 of his report which detailed comments received from the trade as part of the consultation exercise. Five responses had been received.

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

Councillor D Tyler, Chairman of the Licensing and Appeals Board, addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He thanked the Licensing Manager for his report, which he felt was very clear. He explained that it was important that the Council had regard to safeguarding, especially in relation to children and vulnerable people. He asked the Panel to support the recommendations as set out in the report.

In response to questions regarding the Safeguarding Training, the Licensing Manager explained that the training was one hour long. He felt that any longer than this could discourage drivers from attending. He reminded the Panel that drivers attended on a voluntary basis and would have to take time out from work. The Licensing Manager stated that he was satisfied with the training, which primarily had focussed on children and vulnerable people. The Licensing Manager reminded the Panel that if the revised conditions were approved, safeguarding would be incorporated into the Borough Council's Knowledge Test and drivers would have to answer questions on the subject. The Licensing Manager also confirmed that there was no financial impact to the Council on the changes regarding Private Companies offering the DSA test. He explained that drivers would book and pay for the course themselves and provide proof of passing the test to the Council.

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

That Council adopt the revised licensing procedures and conditions.

EC56: **REPORT FROM THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP - PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REVIEW**

The Public Open Space Manager presented the report which presented the findings of the Informal Working Group which had been set up by the Environment and Community Panel with the remit of reviewing the provision of public toilets in the Borough and consider future operations.

The Panel was informed that the Informal Working Group had recommended the following to the Environment and Community Panel:

(i) That the relevant Portfolio Holder give consideration to the potential of leasing the management and operation of the following public conveniences to a private contractor on the basis that the contractor would be able to introduce turnstiles and charge for admission:

- Central Promenade, Hunstanton
- Seagate, Hunstanton

(ii) Discussions to take place with Parish Councils and local stakeholders with regard to the requirement for and the funding of the toilets listed below. Options for Parish Councils are to take on operation, close toilets or charge them to special expenses:

- Heacham Village
- Old Hunstanton
- Holme
- Downham Market, Memorial Playing Field
- Wales Court, Downham Market
- The Howdale, Downham Market.

(iii) Ferry Street, King's Lynn to close Monday to Friday on a three month trial basis, with users being signposted to the Corn Exchange.

(iv) The Walks Broadwalk and Walks Management Building to be referred to King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee to give consideration to charging them as a special expense.

(v) Gaywood – a six month trial of closure with users being signposted to the Library.

(vi) All other public toilets to maintain current arrangements.

The Panel was informed that the Informal Working Group had suggested that any arrangements commenced in the 2018/2019 financial year to allow for thorough consultation with the relevant bodies.

The Chairman thanked the Informal Working Group and officers for their report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to questions, the Panel was informed that King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee would consider the suggestions from the

Informal Working Group at their Special Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016 to consider Special Expenses. Consultation would also be carried out with all other interested parties and results of the consultation would be presented to the Environment and Community Panel at a future meeting.

Councillor J Collop addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He was concerned about consultation with King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee and reminded those present that currently the Committee did not have any decision making powers, unlike Parish Councils. He referred to the recommendations for the Gaywood and Walks toilets, which fell within his Ward. He explained that the Walks was a tourist attraction and brought in people from all over the Borough, who would expect toilet facilities to be available. He also suggested that the toilets at Gaywood be left open, but during shorter hours, which could assist with combatting any anti-social behaviour in the area.

The Chairman explained that the Panel had tasked the Informal Working Group with looking at the operation of public toilets in the Borough and he thanked them for their report. He explained that if the Panel supported the recommendations from the Informal Working Group, the Group and officers could then carry out the necessary consultation and report their findings back to the Panel. The Environment and Community Panel could then make any appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor Smith referred to the proposals to close Ferry Street and Gaywood Toilets and signpost people to other toilets which were available; Corn Exchange for Ferry Street and the Library for Gaywood and he asked if there were any costs involved. The Executive Director, Commercial Services explained that the Corn Exchange and the Library had agreed to the arrangements on a trial basis and there were no costs involved. The Executive Director explained that it had been suggested that there be a three month trial, however, if it was apparent that there were problems, the trial could end early. Any trials would be kept under review.

The Vice Chairman explained that the Gaywood toilets had recently been raised at a recent Safer Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel meeting and how when they were closed local businesses, such as cafés etc. had noticed an increase in people using their toilet facilities. The Executive Director confirmed that users would be signposted to the library on a trial basis.

The Executive Director, Commercial Services reminded the Panel that they had initially asked for a review of public toilets to be presented to the meeting, and a report had been produced by officers for consideration by the Panel. The Panel had decided to establish an Informal Working Group to look at the operation of the toilets and come up with recommendations regarding future operation. The Executive Director explained that there were examples of toilets which were



already provided by Parish Councils and where there was a local need for facilities, discussions could take place with the relevant Parish Council regarding the future operation of the facilities.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Collop, it was confirmed that the garage, which was adjoined to the public toilets in Gaywood, and had been recently put on the market, was not owned by the Borough Council.

Councillor Crofts reminded the Panel that the Borough Council had no statutory requirement to provide public toilets. He felt that the recommendations of the Informal Working Group were fair and suggested that the arrangements could be reviewed in the future if required.

It was clarified that following any consultation a further report would be presented to the Environment and Community Panel for consideration.

Comments were made by the Panel, that even though the Council had no statutory requirement to provide public toilets, it was important that the provision was available. Councillor Hopkins commented that he would like to see all toilets remain open, and alternative options be considered to save money.

**RESOLVED:** (i) The Environment and Community Panel endorsed the Informal Working Group's report.

(ii) Officers and the Informal Working Group to carry out the necessary consultation, as outlined in the report, and present the results of the consultation back to the Panel in due course.

EC57: **WORK PROGRAMME**

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:** (i) The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

(ii) Sustainability Transport Plan be added to the Panel's Work Programme.

EC58: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX.

**The meeting closed at 7.53 pm**