

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel held on Tuesday, 9th April, 2019 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors P Gidney (Chairman), Mrs J Collingham, C J Crofts, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, M Howland, C Manning, T Smith, A Tyler, Mrs E Watson and D Whitby

Portfolio Holders

Councillor A Beales, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Assets

Officers:

Chris Bamfield, Executive Director
Ged Greaves, Senior Policy and Performance Officer
James Grant, Project Officer
Ray Harding, Chief Executive
Fiona Heubeck, Valuer
Humphrey Jamieson, HAZ Project Officer

By Invitation:

Matthew Hayward, Norfolk County Council

RD99: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Blunt.

RD100: **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Councillor Manning being added to the list of attendees.

RD101: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

RD102: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

RD103: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Bird – all items.

RD104: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

RD105: **NORFOLK GREENWAYS PROJECT - MATTHEW HAYWARD - NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Chairman welcomed Matthew Hayward from Norfolk County Council to the meeting. Matthew Hayward provided the Panel with information on the Norfolk Greenways Project, as attached.

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

In response to a question from Councillor Horsbrugh, Matthew Hayward explained that the Greenways could interact with existing and old railway lines and complement each other.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith, Matthew Hayward explained that circular walks would also be looked at between the Greenways to connect all routes where possible.

Councillor Bird addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He explained at the moment the only route into Hunstanton was the A149 which was often congested. If cycle access was provided as an alternative way to reach the coast it could bring more visitors to the coast and benefit the local economy. Councillor Bird also commented that if the Railway was to be reinstated in the future, it probably would not use the historical route so the Greenways project would not interfere with this. Councillor Bird asked what surface would be used on the cycle ways and Matthew Hayward explained that different surface options would be looked at. A high standard surface would be used close to residential centres and different grades would then be used the further away you got. Bound gravel would potentially be used as this gave a rural feel, but was good for road bikes, provided good drainage and had ecological benefits.

Councillor Bird made reference to Sustrans Route 1 which covered the East Coast but did not connect to Hunstanton. He also asked about timescales for delivery. Matthew Hayward explained that funders for the phase from Sandringham to Heacham had been identified and it was hoped that work would commence within the next eighteen months.

In response to a question from Councillor Tyler, Matthew Hayward explained that Sustrans was a key partner in the project to create sustainable travel routes and the work was aligned with the 25 year environment plan which highlighted how linear habitats were key.

Matthew Hayward advised that funding had been secured for Weavers Way and work on this route was likely to start in January 2019.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Matthew Hayward explained that discussions would take place with landowners as appropriate. He also explained that the routes should improve the environment and biodiversity. The route from Heacham to Hunstanton was also discussed.

The Chairman asked if consideration to cycle paths could be incorporated into the design proposals for Hunstanton. The Executive Director explained that an update on the Hemingway proposals would be brought to the Panel at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: The Panel be kept updated on progress as appropriate.

RD106: **QUARTER 3 2018-19 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Senior Policy and Performance Officer presented the Corporate Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 3 2018-2019. He explained that there was no action plan contained within the report as all indicators under the Regeneration and Development Panel remit were meeting target. The Senior Policy and Performance Officer highlighted the following indicators which were performing particularly well:

- EP3a to EP8 – Performance Indicators relating to Planning
- CO8a to CO10b – Performance Indicators relating to the sale of houses on council owned sites.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Policy and Performance Officer for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

The Panel congratulated those involved in meeting targets within the Regeneration and Development Panel's remit.

The Panel discussed the fluctuating housing market and uncertainty relating to Brexit. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Assets, Councillor Beales congratulated those involved in the house sales on the Council owned sites, but advised that caution was needed as the housing market could change quickly.

RESOLVED: The Panel reviewed the Performance Monitoring report.

RD107: **FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND - UPDATE**

The Executive Director provided an update to the Panel. He explained that more detail was available in the Portfolio Holder for Performance's report to Council for 11th April 2019.

It was explained that the Government had invited bid applications to the £675m scheme, which was a two stage process. If applications were successful at Stage 1 development funding would be awarded to develop the bid to a Stage 2 application.

The Executive Director explained that the bid application which had been submitted for King's Lynn had flagged up significant challenges facing the town centre, for example vacant units, antisocial behaviour, transport links and visitor levels. He provided detail of the vision and ambition for the town, which included improving the heritage and culture offer and development opportunities.

The Chief Executive commented that the bid application had highlighted issues and challenges that the town centre faced and the importance of planning for the future. He informed the Panel that the King's Lynn Business Improvement District had been involved in the bid application and approximately 750 individuals had responded to the consultation exercise.

The Chief Executive made reference to the Stronger Towns Fund which would be available for the East of England and explained that a bid application would be submitted for this as appropriate.

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

In response to a question from Councillor Tyler it was explained that all town centres were different, so there were no set guidelines for improvement. The Chief Executive commented that a combination of elements were needed to make a successful town centre, including people living and working in the town centre along with culture, leisure and retail. A unique offer was also required.

The Executive Director commented that the bid application process had highlighted some relatively simple things that could be done to improve connectivity throughout the town centre.

Councillor Bird addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He asked if Hunstanton and Downham Market had been considered for a bid application. It was explained that these had been discussed, but development was already planned for Hunstanton and it would be difficult to make a case for Downham Market as growth was already apparent.

Councillor Crofts commented that there were not many companies that offered bus trips to King's Lynn and he felt that King's Lynn should be promoted as a destination for coach excursions.

Councillor Mrs Collingham explained that lots of discussions had been held at Panel meetings regarding improvements to King's Lynn, but

she was frustrated that nothing seemed to be moving forward. She commented that there were no facilities available for coach parties to get refreshments.

The Executive Director commented that a lot of improvements had been made to the town centre over the last ten years including the Tuesday Market Place, Saturday Market Place, Town Hall, Bus Station and plans for the redevelopment of the Riverfront were ongoing. He also made reference to the Heritage Action Zone, light projections, events in King's Lynn and links to the Arts Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Assets, Councillor Beales commented that, if the Panel had strong opinions, and wanted action to be taken on an issue, they could make recommendations to Cabinet. Informal Working Groups could be set up to look at issues in depth and make recommendations to be considered by the Panel before being passed onto Cabinet.

The Panel discussed the possibility of establishing an Informal Working Group to look at increasing coach trip visitors to King's Lynn. It was agreed that further consideration would be given to this at the Chairman's Sifting Meeting and a report would be brought to the next meeting to consider establishing an Informal Working Group.

RESOLVED: (i) The update was noted.

(ii) A report be presented to the next meeting to consider establishing an Informal Working Group to look at increasing coach trips to King's Lynn.

RD108: **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.

RD109: **EXEMPT - BUSINESS PREMISES NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Valuer and Project Officer from Property Services provided the Panel with information on the Business Premises Needs Assessment for Hunstanton.

The Chairman thanked officers for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Councillor Bird addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He explained that there was a need for year round employment in Hunstanton. He referred to the development proposals which had been highlighted in the officers presentation and explained that unless

year round employment was available it would be difficult to attract those of a working age to live in Hunstanton.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Assets, Councillor Beales explained that the challenge with Hunstanton was that there was little land available for building on and the boundaries of the town were a major constraint. He also referred to the results of the Business Premises Needs Assessment. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Assets also commented that the Council would be required to look at the development opportunities highlighted by officers.

RESOLVED: The update was noted and the Panel to be kept updated on progress as appropriate.

RD110: **EXEMPT - REPORT OF THE HERITAGE ACTION ZONE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP**

The HAZ Programme Manager presented the report which provided the results of the work of the Informal Working Group established to look at the Unlocking Brownfield Sites Feasibility Study. He provided an overview of the work of the Informal Working Group, along with the two sites that had been recommended by the Informal Working Group. The HAZ Programme Manager thanked the Members of the Informal Working Group, officers and Historic England for their contributions.

The Chairman thanked the HAZ Programme Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

The Panel discussed the two sites which had been recommended by the Informal Working Group.

Councillor Smith, who had chaired the Informal Working Group provided information to the Panel on the discussions held by the Informal Working Group. Councillor Smith thanked the Members of the Informal Working Group, officers and Historic England for their contributions to the Informal Working Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Assets, Councillor Beales thanked all those involved in the Informal Working Group and felt that it had been a very worthwhile exercise to look at all the options in depth. He explained that there would need to be a balance between return on investment and improving the area and he felt that the two options put forward would help to achieve this.

RESOLVED: The Panel confirmed the findings of the Informal Working Group and supported their recommendations which would be forwarded onto Cabinet for consideration.

RD111: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

RESOLVED: (i) The Panel's Work Programme was noted.
(ii) The establishment of an Informal Working Group to look at coach trips be considered at the next Sifting Meeting.

RD112: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on Tuesday 11th June 2019 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 8.49 pm