

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, 11th June, 2019 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs J Collingham (Chairman), Miss L Bambridge, J Bhondi, F Bone, M de Whalley, M Howland, B Jones, J Lowe, C Manning, T Parish, S Patel, D Whitby.

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Beal, Kemp, Moriarty, Morley, Pope, Rust and Ryves.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor P Gidney – Cabinet Member for Project Delivery
 Councillor P Kunes – Cabinet Member for Commercial Services
 Councillor B Long – Leader of the Council
 Councillor G Middleton – Cabinet Member for Business Development
 Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Health

OFFICERS:

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director
 Philip Bayfield – Corn Exchange Manager
 Mark Fuller – Principal Project Surveyor
 Neil Grommet – Chief Operating Officer, Alive Management
 Ray Harding – Chief Executive
 Matthew Henry – Property Services Manager
 Humphrey Jamieson – HAZ Programme Manager
 Steven King – THI Project Officer

RD1: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: Councillor Parish was appointed Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year.

RD2: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

RD3: MINUTES

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

RD4: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kemp declared an interest as a Norfolk County Councillor.

RD5: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

RD6: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillors Beal, Kemp, Moriarty, Morley, Pope, Rust and Ryves for Agenda item RD12.

The Councillors present under Standing Order 34 were also invited by the Chairman to participate in the Workshop Session under item RD9.

RD7: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

RD8: **APPOINTMENTS TO TASK GROUPS AND INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS**

The Panel considered the report which had been circulated with the Agenda. A brief overview of the work of the Custom Build and Self Build Policy Development Task Group was provided to the Panel.

The Panel also noted that, should the need arise, the Informal Working Groups which were to be disbanded could be revived or new Informal Working Groups could be established.

RESOLVED: 1. That the Custom and Self Build Policy Development Task Group continues to operate and the Democratic Services Officer be instructed to seek Membership of the Task Group from the Group Leaders for the 2019/2020 municipal year. The Panel resolved that the Task Group should be made up of 4 Members (2 Conservative, 1 Independent and 1 Labour).

2. The following Informal Working Groups to be disbanded as they have concluded their work:

- Guildhall Informal Working Group
- Riverfront Informal Working Group
- Heritage Action Zone Unlocking Brownfield Sites Informal Working Group

RD9: **HIGH STREETS AND HERITAGE ACTION ZONE**

Officers provided information on the High Street Heritage Action Scheme and the funding opportunity, as included in the attached presentation.

The Property Services Officer provided some background information on the Scheme, explaining that the Historic England Urban Panel had previously identified King's Lynn as an area of significance and had encouraged it to apply for Heritage Action Zone status. King's Lynn had subsequently been designated as one of only a handful of Heritage Action Zones in the country.

Members broke out into groups for a workshop session to consider if a bid should be submitted to the fund, how much should the Council bid for, what areas should be focussed on and should public realm improvements be included.

The Panel was informed that £40 million was available in the fund countrywide and Councils could submit bids ranging from £250,000 to £2 million, with the expectation that this would be match funded.

Feedback from the workshop sessions included:

- The town centre offer needed to focus on offering something that could not be provided on the internet. Move away from retail, which could be done online at home and focus on leisure and restaurants.
- The offer needed to be suitable for all age groups.
- Play areas and soft play complex.
- Utilise the post office building. It could be converted into small units.
- Utilise the space above shops for flats. Living above flats would help bring activity into the town centre. Rent rates could be capped to encourage people to move into the town centre.
- Car parking needed to be considered if more people were being encouraged to live in the town centre.
- Creative Hub/IT cafes to bring in young people.
- Relocate the library into the town centre.
- Men's shed.
- Crafting and sewing.
- Indoor skate park in the town centre.
- Street Art.
- Greenery and water features.
- Some money to be used for public realm to soften some areas and combine this with street art.
- Exhibition space.
- Look at other funding opportunities for public realm.
- Work in partnership with charities and youth based organisations.
- Use vacant units for pop up shops and give people the opportunity to test new businesses.

- Refurbish shop fronts.
- Encourage development around the bigger units.

Each of the breakout groups had different thoughts on how much the Council should bid for, ranging from £1 to £1.25 million.

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions.

RESOLVED: The feedback from the workshops would be used to assist with the application for funding.

RD10: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

The following items were suggested for addition to the Work Programme:

- Walk around King's Lynn.
- Southgates.
- Flood Risk. The Panel was informed that this item would fall within the remit of the Environment and Community Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

RD11: **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.

RD12: **CORN EXCHANGE CINEMA PROPOSALS**

Members of the Panel had conducted a tour of the Corn Exchange and the proposed cinema area, prior to the meeting.

The Executive Director presented Members with information on the proposals and the report that would be presented to Cabinet on 18th June.

Councillor Beal addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and officers responded to questions relating to the cost of showing a film and the percentage which would be payable to the film provider. Information was also provided on the ticket price and occupancy rates. Councillor Beal referred to other cinemas in the area, including attendances at Hunstanton.

The Executive Director referred to the Consultant's report which had been presented to Cabinet in October 2018 and provided more information on costs, projected profits and a sensitivity test.

Councillor Morley addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that the risk and cost was too high and he was suspicious of the data which had been included in the report. He also commented that if there was a demand for a greater cinema offer in King's Lynn, then surely a large multiplex would have already taken advantage of this. Councillor Morley also commented that the space could perhaps be better utilised to accommodate the needs of young people. The Executive Director responded that multiplex cinemas had been interested in coming to King's Lynn, but it was important to encourage people into the town centre and protect the existing offer at the Majestic. The Executive Director explained that the owner of the Majestic had been supportive of the proposals. It was also explained that the idea of the cinema had originally been considered as part of the Guildhall redevelopment, making use of the White Barn. However plans for the Guildhall had now moved on.

Councillor Moriarty addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He was concerned that the market could change in the future and there could be less demand for cinemas with films being made available at home earlier. He did agree that it was important to bring life into the town centre, but car parking would need to be considered. The Executive Director acknowledged the concerns, which were mirrored by the industry as a whole.

Councillor Lowe raised concerns about competition between the Corn Exchange and the Majestic. He was also concerned that there were not enough restaurants available in King's Lynn to support the early evening economy. It was explained by officers that programming would be looked at and that the owner of the Majestic had been supportive of the proposals. The Portfolio Holder for Project Delivery, Councillor Gidney, commented that he felt that King's Lynn had a lot to offer, it was important to continue to build on the offer for the future and that there were a lot of restaurants available in the evening. He also commented that an out of town cinema would have a detrimental effect on the Majestic.

Councillor Lowe commented that an out of town cinema would be better as it would be modern and attractive. The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Collingham commented that it was important to attract people to the town centre which would benefit businesses and retailers.

Councillor Bone commented that consideration needed to be given to parking charges as the Lite cinema at Wisbech had free parking. Councillor Bone commented that he felt that the costs had been played down and the rewards exaggerated.

Councillor de Whalley commented that he had concerns over the business plan, but that it was important for King's Lynn to be resilient and plan for the future.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Parish referred to how the costs would be funded and the payback period. The Executive Director explained that advice had been provided from the Finance Department on the payback period.

In response to a question from Councillor Lowe, the Executive Director explained that alternative uses for the space at the Corn Exchange had been looked at, including Theatre space; however this did not provide a return on investment.

Councillor Patel commented that he thought the proposals were fantastic and would benefit the town centre. He also commented that it was good that the works would incorporate necessary repairs and refurbishment such as the roof and the toilets.

Councillor Pope addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. In response to a question regarding the roof, the Executive Director commented that it would be fully insulated and meets building regulation requirements. The costs associated with the roof works included removal of the glass roof.

In response to a question from Councillor Bone it was explained that there was a window when there would be no performances within which the works could start. The proposed cinema area could then be isolated and work could continue as required.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health thanked the Panel for their comments regarding the proposals. She commented that it was important to continue to improve the offer in King's Lynn and support businesses, retailers and the evening economy. She also referred to the current Corn Exchange subsidy and how the cinema would improve the offer available to residents and tourists.

Councillor Rust addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. She commented that she did not oppose the proposal but was concerned that the cost of tickets would present a barrier to some people.

Councillor Lowe reiterated the concerns of Councillor Rust. He also commented that technology and industries were constantly changing and asked if there would still be a demand for cinemas in ten years' time.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Development referred to the Future High Streets Fund which was available to bid for and he commented that King's Lynn needed to be made into a destination and the offer increased. He explained that government funding to council's was

reducing and Council's needed to look at ways to be commercial and raise income.

The Chairman, Councillor Collingham thanked the Panel for their comments. She commented that she was in support of the proposals but acknowledged there was an element of risk.

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration and Development Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet, as set out below:

1. Agree to proceed with the Corn Exchange cinema proposals and amend the Capital Programme as detailed in the report at 2.4.5.
2. Include options in the tender for ground floor toilets, façade, foyer area as separate cost items.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Commercial Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to proceed with the procurement and construction of the cinema screens and associated works.

RD13: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on Tuesday 30th July 2019 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm