

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, 7th September, 2021 at 4.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors J Collingham (Chair), L Bambridge, P Beal, F Bone, C Bower, C J Crofts, M de Whalley, P Gidney, C Morley, V Spikings (substitute for C Manning), A Tyler (substitute for B Jones), and D Whitby.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor R Blunt – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development
Councillor G Middleton – Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage

BY INVITATION:

Councillor Rust
Vicky Etheridge – King's Lynn Business Improvement District

OFFICERS:

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director
Alan Gomm – Planning Policy Manager
Hannah Wood-Handy – Principal Planner

RD39: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Manning and Jones.

RD40: MINUTES

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

RD41: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

RD42: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD43: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

There was none.

RD44: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

RD45: BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT UPDATE

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The Chair welcomed Vicky Etheridge from King's Lynn Business Improvement District to the meeting who provided the Panel with an update on the organisation, as attached.

The Chair thanked Vicky Etheridge for her presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bone asked if there were any plans to extend the BID area to include Industrial Estates which could generate more income. Vicky Etheridge explained that this was something that could be explored if the BID went to a second term.

Councillor Tyler asked if there was a demand for national leisure businesses and Vicky Etheridge explained that it depended on suitable premises and organisations, but this was more of a Borough Council issue.

Councillor de Whalley asked if information was available on the demographic of visitors to King's Lynn. Vicky Etheridge explained that work had been carried out by Vision King's Lynn and regional and national study results were also available. The Assistant Director also made reference to the Towns Fund and a survey carried out by the Federation of Small Businesses and provided information on barriers to the market and recovery.

Councillor Rust commented that new retailers into the town centre had to pay the BID Levy although they were not part of the ballot process and the impact the levy had on small businesses. She made reference to vacant units in the town centre and was concerned that there was a lot of organisations offering business advice and feared duplication of what was being offered by the BID. She also referred to the first BID ballot which was unsuccessful. Vicky Etheridge explained that regulations allowed for the ballot to be re-run and the boundary had been amended for the second ballot. She acknowledged that businesses that voted no still had to pay the levy and she encouraged all businesses to make the most of the BID by putting their views forward and engaging in the available opportunities such as free courses and seminars.

In response to a question from Councillor Bambridge, Vicky Etheridge explained that the BID signposted businesses and could provide

information on grant funding opportunities available, such as Covid recovery funding.

In response to a question from Councillor Tyler, the Assistant Director provided information on the results of a recent survey which provided information on barriers for entry and potential future options for the town centre, incorporating entertainment and leisure.

Councillor Beal commented that the types of shops in King's Lynn needed to be diversified and the basic needs for shoppers needed to be met.

RESOLVED: The report was noted and the Panel would like a further update in a years' time.

RD46: **OPPOSITION MEMBERS ITEM - START UP UNITS AND SHORT TIME RENTALS - REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR RUST**

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At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Rust presented her item to the Panel, as included in the Agenda. She referred to vacant shops in the town centre, how small and new businesses could be encouraged into the town centre, support for start-up businesses and pop up shop opportunities.

The Assistant Director explained that this was a national issue and needed careful management. One option could be to procure expertise to look at this in more detail, but it may well need subsidising.

The Chair, Councillor Collingham felt that it was important to have a scheme in place and there were lots of spaces in the town centre that could accommodate opportunities.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage explained that vacant units was a national issue and the idea of pop up shops was something that could potentially be looked at by King's Lynn BID, of which he was a Board Member and the Borough Council was a levy payer. The Borough Council also needed to define their role in any schemes, for example would they have a 'hand-up' or 'hand-out' role and caution would need to be exercised.

Councillor Bambridge made reference to the Markets Informal Working Group which had previously looked at trying to reinvigorate the Market offer and recruit a Market Toby. She felt that offering small and new businesses the opportunity to have pop up market stalls would be a good idea.

Councillor Spikings commented that the Market was important and shouldn't be allowed to die, opportunities were being missed if the

Council did not act now. She referred to the huts used for previous Christmas Markets and suggested that these could be used for pop up stalls to promote new businesses.

The Chair suggested a trial event, perhaps to tie in with a Christmas Market, to promote local and small businesses.

Councillor Beal commented that internet shopping had a detrimental impact on High Streets and a visit to King's Lynn needed to be an experience and that the Council should work with the owners of vacant units to explore opportunities.

Councillor Bone felt that a lot of the units in King's Lynn could be too big for new and small businesses and suggested that an Emporium type shop, based on commission, could be set up where small businesses could hire a small space in a bigger unit.

Councillor Morley suggested that officers produce a pilot package for Markets and start up units which could be considered by the Panel at the next meeting.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Gidney commented that a Christmas Market which appealed to families and included entertainment would be a good place to start. He asked if there were statistics available on new businesses, vacant units and trends. The Assistant Director explained that this was something he could look into providing.

Councillor de Whalley commented that a better market offer would draw people into the town centre and felt that a post-pandemic strategy to revitalise the town centre and the market was necessary. He also hoped that the BID could look into the provision of pop up shops and start up units.

Councillor Bambridge commented that competition on the market was a good thing, for example one of each type of stall should not be limited.

Councillor Whitby suggested that the first step should be to look at the demand, then options could be considered.

The Chair, Councillor Collingham hoped that plans to deliver a Christmas Market could be considered as the first step, promotion was important and it should aim to showcase local small businesses. She asked the Panel to consider a recommendation to Cabinet to take this forward.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Middleton explained that he would take the comments of the Panel back to the Cabinet, officers and the BID so that options could be considered and a Working Group of Councillors could be involved if

required. He commented that a potential market could tie in with the Christmas Lights Switch on event.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage consider the comments made by the Regeneration and Development Panel and report back to the Panel on progress as appropriate.

RD47: **UPDATE ON MEDWORTH INCINERATOR**

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Officers provided the Panel with an update on the Medworth Incinerator and provided detail of the role of Local Authorities in the process, as attached.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members, as summarised below.

It was confirmed that once the application had been lodged the Council would have 14 days to review the consultation representation and the Borough Council were considered to be a host Authority as cabling would be required in the Borough. The application would then be considered by the Planning Committee in due course.

In response to a question from Councillor de Whalley it was explained that written representations were encouraged but Hearings could be requested by interested parties. It was also explained that all relevant Local Authority and national policies would be considered.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development it was confirmed that the applicant would be required to provide responses to all the representations made.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development suggested that the Panel have a debate on the disposal of waste and the processes involved.

It was suggested that the information provided to the Panel would benefit all Members and a Member briefing session should be arranged. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development agreed to look at getting something arranged for Members.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the update and requested to be kept up to date on progress as appropriate.

RD48: **PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

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No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting, however the Chair permitted the following questions to be asked.

Councillor Gidney asked why a declaration of CIL was required on first application instead of when the permission was approved. The Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration agreed to respond in writing.

Councillor de Whalley asked when the next round of CIL funding would be open for bids and the Portfolio Holder for Development and Regeneration explained that an post appraisal report on the first round of funding would be included in a forthcoming Cabinet report, which would also give details of the next round of funding. It was anticipated that this report would also be considered by the Regeneration and Development Panel prior to Cabinet.

Councillor Tyler asked if waste collections were affected because of Covid would there be a reduction in fees that the Council would have to pay. It was explained that the question was not within the remit of the Portfolio Holders present at the meeting, however the Portfolio Holder for Business, Culture and Heritage commented that he thought the bulk of the contract was based on tonnage.

Councillor Morley asked when Parishes should start to look at preparing their applications for CIL funding and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development explained that a timetable would be included in the forthcoming Cabinet report.

Councillor Morley asked questions relating to the Governance of the Towns Fund Board and funding as he felt that it had excluded member input from the Major Projects Board and the Regeneration and Development Panel. It was explained that now that the detail was coming through on individual projects there would be the opportunity for Member input. The Portfolio Holders and the Assistant Director agreed to provide clarification on the Local Assurance Framework.

The Chair asked for clarification to be presented to the next meeting of the Panel.

RD49: **TO CONSIDER HOW THE PANEL COULD ASSIST TO DEVELOP POLICY/STRATEGY ON THE LONG TERM VISIONS FOR TOWN CENTRES**

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The Chair asked for this item to be deferred to the next meeting so that the Panel could hold a detailed discussion on the way forward.

RESOLVED: The item was deferred.

RD50: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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

- The Vice Chair asked if a future item for the Panel to consider could be the repurposing of existing buildings to take forward future projects.
- CITB update.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

RD51: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 4.30pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm