

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Tuesday, 6th September, 2022 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors C Sampson (Chair), C Bower, A Bubb, A Bullen, M de Whalley, I Devereux, C Hudson (substitute for S Collop), J Kirk, J Moriarty (substitute for S Squire) and M Wilkinson

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillors A Kemp, C Morley and E Nockolds.

OFFICERS:

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director
Phillip Eke – Tourism Support Officers

EC17: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Collop, Lowe and Squire.

EC18: MINUTES

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

EC19: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EC20: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

EC21: MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34

Councillors Kemp, Morley and Nockolds.

EC22: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EC23: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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The Tourism Support Officer presented the Tourism Development Plan for 2022-2026. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Chair thanked the Tourism Support Officer for his presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor de Whalley asked questions relating to threats to wildlife, promoting responsible tourism and low paid tourism jobs. The Tourism Support Officer provided information on sensitive locations which needed to be protected and could not be promoted, but there would be a focus on promoting the natural environment including a 'Visit West Norfolk Naturally' campaign. With reference to jobs, it was explained that the Tourism Support Officer linked in with Employer Forums as appropriate.

Councillor Devereux made reference to the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership and the 'Limits of Acceptable Change Study'. The Tourism Support Officer provided more information on this piece of work and explained that it highlighted areas where they wanted to attract visitors as well as protecting vulnerable natural environments.

Councillor Bullen asked about promotion of the Fens, Downham Market and if West Norfolk was promoted as a sailing destination. The Tourism Support Officer explained that the Fens were promoted in publications and through the Fens Biosphere Partnership. Downham Market was also promoted and the Tourism Support Officer informed Members that he had meetings scheduled with Downham Market Town Council to look at further promotion.

The Tourism Support Officer provided information on the Sail the Wash project and that West Norfolk was promoted as a sailing destination.

Councillor Moriarty made reference to protecting the rural environment and he made comments on the Tourism Plan relating to visitor development plans, which the Tourism Support Officer agreed to clarify within the plan and explained to the Panel that the Tourism Department provided statistics, information and data to Parish Councils as required.

Councillor Moriarty also made reference to the section of the plan relating to visiting West Norfolk out of season and commented that villages sometimes needed respite from the busy summer season, so marketing needed to be targeted to places that could deal with the tourism and had facilities available. The Tourism Support Officer explained that this aspect of the plan would be carefully approached and experiences that were right for the area would be looked at.

Councillor Moriarty asked how the Tourism Department minimised risks and the Tourism Support Officer explained that this could relate to if an area asked to stop being promoted then the Tourism Department

would stop and ask others to stop as well, but this would need to be balanced against the impact it could have on local businesses. The Tourism Support Officer explained that the Tourism Department had approached Parish Councils in recent times regarding promotions, and local residents had been surveyed in recent times by other organisations supported by the Tourism Department on how they saw tourism in their area.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and asked about tourism recovery following the pandemic and the new cost of living challenges ahead. She also asked if West Norfolk was promoted as a destination to retired people. The Tourism Support Officer explained that West Norfolk was slowly recovering from the Pandemic, but the visitor economy was still lower than pre-pandemic levels.

The Tourism Support Officer provided information on paid promotions which had been carried out to promote West Norfolk as a destination for coach groups and tour operators and example itineraries were also advertised.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Bower referred to Hunstanton and the problems some businesses had with recruitment. The Tourism Support Officer explained that joint working with the West Norfolk Tourism Forum and the College of West Anglia had been carried out and it was a strategic aim in the Tourism Plan to strengthen joint working opportunities.

Councillor Bubb commented that work needed to be carried out to encourage businesses to stay open longer in the day and longer during the season to encourage tourism. He also commented that West Norfolk should be promoted abroad. The Assistant Director clarified that car parking tickets were transferable across Council owned car parks, and this would be promoted on new signage in due course. The Operational Team were also looking at ways to make public toilets open longer, dependant on demand and specific events.

Councillor Bullen felt that there were missed opportunities with Seahenge, the Snettisham Treasure at the British Museum and links with Captain Vancouver. The Tourism Support Officer explained that Seahenge could not be promoted as it was a vulnerable area with regards to attracting significant footfall, but the Museums were promoted. Work was also ongoing to promote History Trails in Norfolk.

Councillor Moriarty made reference to the Guildhall and the opportunities this would bring to West Norfolk.

Councillor Morley addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He made reference to transport issues and felt that if these were addressed it would encourage a greater level of visitors and the Borough Council should actively lobby as appropriate.

Councillor Bubb commented that the Museum should be open longer and agreed with Councillor Bullen that more should be done to promote the links with Captain Vancouver.

Councillor Kirk commented that King's Lynn would attract more visiting craft if there were better facilities near the Pontoons such as toilets, showers and servicing facilities for visiting craft such as tank emptying, refuelling and fresh water supplies to be provided. The Chair supported the comments made by Councillor Kirk.

RESOLVED: The Panel endorsed the Tourism Development Plan for 2022-2026 and the Tourism Support Officer would take into consideration the comments made by the Panel as appropriate.

EC24: **UPDATE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

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Members who were representatives on Outside Bodies which fell under the remit of the Environment and Community Panel had been invited to present an update report to the Panel, which had been included in the agenda.

The Chair thanked the Members for their reports and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee

Councillor de Whalley, who was a Member of the Area Museums Committee commented that the Kick the Dust project had been very successful, but needed to secure long term funding. The Chair agreed with this, and the Panel suggested that Cabinet's attention be drawn to the importance of this project and if any assistance was available.

Councillor de Whalley commented that Lynn Museum had great rotating displays.

Councillor Bubb commented that it was important to continue to work to promote the Museums and increase visitor numbers.

Councillor Nockolds commented that as part of the Service Level Agreement with Norfolk Museums Service free admission to the Museum was offered from October to March. She agreed that it was important to continue to work to increase visitor numbers and school trips to the Museum had increased.

Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel

Councillor Kemp made reference to the Adult Safeguarding Board and work that was ongoing to relaunch the trigger process for antisocial behaviour issues.

West Norfolk Community Transport Project

Councillor Nockolds commented that attendances for dial-a-bus needed to increase, and that the Pandemic had impacted the service. She explained that the project provided a critical service in West Norfolk and should continue to be supported.

Councillor Moriarty asked if the increasing petrol costs would impact the service and Councillor Nockolds commented that finances would be carefully monitored, and action taken as appropriate.

In response to a question from Councillor Bubb, it was explained that West Norfolk Community Transport had received CIL funding for an electric bus which was in use. There were plans to introduce more electric vehicles in the future, but cost was an issue.

In response to a question from Councillor Bullen, Councillor Nockolds commented that the service was promoted, and West Norfolk Community Transport were now becoming more active on social media and appeared on tourism websites.

RESOLVED: The update reports were noted and the relevant Cabinet Members attention be drawn to the Panel comments relating to the Kick the Dust Project.

EC25: **PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

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There were no Portfolio Holders present at the meeting but Councillor Moriarty provided information on an issue that he would draw to the attention of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community relating to food waste and black bin waste being mixed kerbside and put into the same compartment of the refuse collection vehicle. The Assistant Director requested that Councillor Moriarty send him details of the incident so that it could be investigated.

EC26: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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The Chair invited Members to submit items for addition to the Work Programme to him as appropriate.

Councillor Bubb, Chair of the Climate Change Informal Working Group requested that a meeting of the Group be arranged in the near future. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to set up a meeting.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC27: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 1st November 2022 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm