

**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, 3rd January, 2023 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, S Collop, M de Whalley, T Parish and M Wilkinson.

**PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34:** Councillor Kemp

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** Councillor Kunes – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community

**OFFICERS:**

Martin Chisholm – Assistant Director

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Jemma Curtis – Regeneration Programmes Manager

Nicola Cooper – Place Based Investment Programme Officer

**BY INVITATION:**

Captain Jary – King's Lynn Conservancy Board

**EC41: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Devereux and Kirk.

**EC42: MINUTES**

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Councillor Parish raised a concern relating to Councillor Devereux's update provided at the previous meeting in which he stated that he had been appointed Chair of the Wash Shoreline Management Plan Elected Members Forum. Councillor Parish commented Councillor Devereux was also acting as a consultant for the Wash Barrier PLC and that this presented a conflict of interest. Councillor Parish commented that he had taken the issue up with the Leader of the Council.

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

**EC43: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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The Chair, Councillor Sampson and Portfolio Holder Councillor Kunes declared an interest in item EC47: Update on the Work of King's Lynn Conservancy Board as they were both Council appointed Members of the Board.

EC44: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC45: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Kemp.

EC46: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

EC47: **UPDATE ON THE WORK OF KING'S LYNN CONSERVANCY BOARD**

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Captain Jary from the King's Lynn Conservancy Board attended the meeting and provided the Panel with an update on the work of the Conservancy Board, as attached.

The Chair thanked Captain Jary for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and asked about the state of pollution in and around The Wash and for the Conservancy Board's thoughts on the proposal for the Wash Barrier. Captain Jary explained that the Conservancy Board had a pollution plan in place, support from a national body, response equipment and monitoring was also undertaken by IFCA. It was explained that over the past two to three years levels had been good and clean. Captain Jary explained that sewage spills were not within the remit of the Conservancy Board and small spills often did not show up on the monitoring equipment as they did not affect the pollution levels.

In relation to the Wash Barrier Project, Captain Jary explained that it was concerning that the Conservancy Board and other port authorities that would be affected by the proposals had not yet been consulted. He explained that there were concerns, but he awaited the detail and that the proposals would have an impact on the natural environment of the Wash.

Councillor Bullen asked questions relating to visiting crafts and Captain Jary explained that he worked closely with the Council on the operation

of the pontoons and provided navigational assistance to visiting pleasure craft. He supported plans for the improvement of the facilities available at the pontoons.

Councillor de Whalley asked questions about the accessibility of the Ferry and what work the Conservancy Board was doing to tackle climate change. Captain Jary explained that the Conservancy Board was not responsible for the Ferry, but commented that there was not an easy solution to improve access.

With regards to Climate Change, Captain Jary explained that sea level rises were discussed at Conservancy Board meetings and the Board had a duty to safeguard craft and offices. Siltation was also managed through byelaws to ensure that the cut was deep enough for ships to pass through, and this year some dredging would be required to take silt and sand out of the system.

In response to a question from Councillor Parish, Captain Jary explained that the Conservancy Board's Annual General Meeting was open to the public and papers from meetings were available from the Conservancy Board upon request.

In response to a further question from Councillor Parish relating to sea water quality which had resulted in a shellfish ban and flow from rivers, Captain Jary explained that the ban on shellfish was due to natural pollutants which could not be controlled. He also explained that there were many factors that could affect the flow from rivers including the amount of inland rainwater and how much water had been diverted.

Councillor Bubb commented that the Ferry was not fit for purpose and Captain Jary explained that it was not an option to use Common Stathe Square as a Ferry landing stage as it was used for ship traffic and turning into the docks and would be dangerous.

**RESOLVED:** The update was noted.

EC48: **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) AND RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF) UPDATE**

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The Assistant Director explained that this report was a follow on from the Cabinet report of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 and provided an overview of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund funding allocations and how they would be administered. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Officers firstly presented information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Councillor Bubb referred to the Markets Task Group which had made a list of recommendations to enhance the Market offer and it was confirmed that this could be considered.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and stated that she supported the Ferry feasibility study. She commented that active travel, public transport, increasing footfall in the town centre and improvements to coastal footpaths especially in West Lynn should be a priority for this funding.

Councillor de Whalley asked for the Norfolk Greenways Project, projects to reduce air pollution, Kick the Dust project, expansion of the school of nursing and the Carnegie Library to be considered for this funding. The Regeneration Programmes Manager informed Members that at the Regeneration and Development Panel meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January would be receiving information on the Norfolk wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which would cover elements of the Norfolk Greenways Project.

In response to a question from Councillor de Whalley, the Assistant Director explained that it hoped that this was long term funding, but the future was always uncertain. He also reminded the Panel of the Tourism Informal Working Group who were looking at a high-level strategy for West Norfolk.

Councillor Bullen made a plea that the funding was not just King's Lynn focussed and it was vital that Downham Market and the Southern part of the Borough be included. Councillor Bower agreed that it needed to be Borough wide and that Hunstanton also be included.

The Assistant Director explained that an equitable approach would need to be ensured and there would be a role for Councillors to promote the funding within their local communities.

Councillor Kunes, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change endorsed comments made by Councillor Kemp in that he supported improvement works to the West Lynn Footpath.

Members were reminded that there were two different funds available, one of which was focussed on Rural Prosperity and officers provided information on the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Officers explained that as this was a specialist field it was anticipated that administration of the scheme would be outsourced to an organisation that had experience in administering grants. Once funding allocations had been confirmed, then work would be carried out with delivery partners to identify the application process. It was also clarified that the scheme would be complementary to CIL and would not duplicate Parish Partnership Schemes.

Members were provided with information on the Partnership Board and Programme Management Board.

Councillor Parish commented that other industries needed to be considered over and above Tourism and commented that it should not just be about increasing Tourism, but ensuring that it is managed, and the infrastructure is there to support it.

**RESOLVED:** That the Environment and Community Panel recommends Cabinet approval for the progression of Officer work to expediate spend of the UKSPF funding for 2022/2023 and support for preparatory work to facilitate delivery of both the UKSPF and REPF programmes into 2023/24 as set out in the presentation.

EC49: **UPDATE ON THE OPERATION OF THE HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING DELIVERY TASK GROUP FROM TASK GROUP MEMBERS**

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Councillor Collop who was a Member of the Task Group raised concerns that the Terms of Reference for this Task Group stated that it would meet on a monthly basis, but currently this was not the case.

Councillor Bubb who was a Member of the Task Group explained that it was important for the Task Group to meet monthly over the winter period and that there should be a schedule of monthly meetings between October and April.

**RESOLVED:** The Chair agreed to meet with officers and Members of the Task Group and bring an update back to the Panel at the next meeting.

EC50: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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The following items were identified for consideration for addition to the Work Programme:

- Friends of Horsey Seals update.
- Norfolk Rivers Trust update on what they were doing to improve river quality.
- Wash Barrier Proposal.
- Anglian Water and Water Extraction.
- Opportunities for Young People – Employment and Aspiration.
- Councillor Collop asked for an update on Gayton Road Cemetery and the Assistant Director explained that future site options were being looked at and then an update would be presented to the Panel.

- Councillor Bubb asked for an update on footpath maintenance and schemes and was advised by the Chair to take up specific issues with Norfolk County Council.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC51: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel was scheduled to take place on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

A Joint Panel meeting has also been arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 at 4.30pm in the Town Hall, King's Lynn.

**The meeting closed at 6.47 pm**