

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, 23rd July, 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors Bearshaw (Chair), Beal, Bubb, Collingham, Colwell, Dickinson (substitute for Blunt), Everett, Hodson, Lintern, Osborne and Ratcliffe.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity

Councillor Ring – Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillor Kemp

OFFICERS:

Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive

Oliver Judges – Executive Director

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Tim Fitzhigham – Cultural Officer

James Grant – Principal Project Manager

Mark Fuller – Principal Project Surveyor

Dave Clack – Corporate Health and Safety

BY INVITATION:

Representatives from Metro Dynamics

Representatives from the King's Lynn Ferry

RD14: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blunt and Crofts.

RD15: MINUTES

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

RD16: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was none.

RD17: URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

RD18: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Kemp.

RD19: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

RD20: **WEST NORFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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The Assistant Director presented the update which provided Members with an update on the West Norfolk Economic Development Strategy including recent progress, engagement, consultation and emerging themes.

The representative from Metro Dynamics provided an overview of the engagement that had been carried out including a launch of the survey and business round table exercises. The Panel was advised that the information and evidence collected would be used to create the vision statement.

The Panel were referred to the five key themes and the strategic priorities against the themes as detailed in the presentation.

The next stage would be to review the information and produce a draft which would then be shared for feedback with an aim to take the final version of the Strategy through to Cabinet in November 2024.

A copy of the presentation is attached.

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

The Chair, Councillor Bearshaw commented that transport investment was key.

In response to a question from Councillor Lintern, it was explained that further community engagement would take place to gain feedback on the draft strategy.

Councillor Colwell commented that work needed to be carried out to build confidence in public transport. He hoped that all would engage in the draft strategy and provide feedback.

Councillor Bubb asked if twenty years was too long term as things could change. The Assistant Director advised that the vision needed to

be long term in terms of infrastructure and investment, but would be reviewed as required.

Councillor Hodson referred to the Council review of the commercial portfolio and rent levels. The Executive Director commented that the Council was looking at their investment portfolio and needed to get a balance between regeneration investment and income to the council, based on demand and supply.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, Councillor Ring, advised that the West Norfolk Economic Strategy was one of a number of Strategies coming forward and it was important that the emerging Strategies all aligned. He referred to the Council's investment portfolio and, in reviewing rent levels, that it was important not to interfere and undermine the private sector market.

Councillor Ring advised that the Strategy would be long term, but would be reviewed regularly.

RESOLVED: The update was noted.

RD21: **UPDATE ON THE FERRY**

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The Principal Project Surveyor provided the Panel with detail of the Borough Council and Norfolk County Council study on the ferry infrastructure which had been commissioned in 2022. The study had concluded that approximately £6 million of investment was required for a solution for the link span and pontoon, both sides, and for a new ferry with wheels.

Following the results of the study, it had been determined that the business case wasn't viable, and the results of the study had gone no further.

The Principal Project Surveyor also explained that work was ongoing between the Borough and County Council to determine the ownership of the ferry structures.

Health and safety checks had also been carried out and some repairs required to the King's Lynn side had been identified. A contractor was in the process of being procured to carry out the repair works required.

The Chair had invited the operator of the King's Lynn ferry to the meeting to address the Panel and the operator of the ferry explained that he was pleased that work was being carried out to the steps on the King's Lynn side as someone had recently fell over. He commented that although minor remedial work was being carried out, more

investment was required in the ferry service as it was a valuable public service.

The Principal Project Surveyor commented that a Structural Assessment of both landing stages was required and he was in the process of arranging for this assessment to be carried out.

The Chair thanked officers and the operator of the ferry for the update and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Colwell referred to the Norfolk County Council Devolution Deal and that it had recently been put on hold for three months. He asked if the Council would be putting in a request for funding for the ferry upgrade and other improvements to public transport serving the town centre. He asked that Cabinet give consideration to submitting requests to Norfolk County Council for funding opportunities as a result of the Devolution Deal.

The Corporate Health and Safety Officer explained that the £6 million investment identified by the Study was disproportionate to the amount of people that used the service, therefore alternative options needed to be considered and these should be based on the outcome of a structural survey.

The Chair asked if the Council had looked at the vacant Del Monte site which could be used to extend the ferry car park.

The Assistant Director commented that the Council was engaged in the Devolution process and working with colleagues at Norfolk County Council to look at routes to funding and investment opportunities.

The operator of the ferry commented that there had been a reduction in the use of the ferry post-Covid, but he also felt that the state of the landing stages could put users off. He commented that extending the car park would encourage more people to use the ferry and that more signage, including 'park and sail' would encourage more visitors to use the service.

Councillor Bubb asked for consideration to be given to moving the landing stage King's Lynn side to a more suitable location.

Councillor Collingham commented that a strategy was needed, and firstly consideration needed to be given to if the ferry should be promoted more as a tourist attraction or active travel link. She commented that the ferry should be part of the heritage offering for the town centre.

Councillor Kemp addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and commented that the ferry was an important commuter route and transport link and Town Deal Board funding should be used to improve

the service. She commented that accessibility was an issue and proper walkways were required. Councillor Kemp commented that £6 million wasn't too much to invest in this important service for residents and tourists and investment would result in increased footfall in the town.

The Executive Director commented that work was ongoing with the Borough and County Council and health and safety checks would be carried out as required.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity explained that he would press for health and safety issues to be dealt with. He acknowledged that there were long term challenges due to funding and highlighted future opportunities that could benefit the ferry such as the Guildhall Project.

The Chief Executive informed the Panel that work would be carried out to commission the structural survey so that repair works could be identified and work would continue to determine the ownership of the Ferry.

RESOLVED: The update was noted.

RD22: **SOUTHGATES REGENERATION AREA UPDATE**

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The Principal Project Manager presented an update on the Southgates Regeneration Area. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Panel was informed that a more detailed update on progress would be presented to the Panel at their meeting in September.

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

The Chair asked if air and noise pollution would increase as a result of the work and the Principal Project Manager stated that Norfolk County Council would be creating the highways scheme, so detail would be available then.

Councillor Ring, Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture commented that the Masterplan provided the best options for the site, which was an important gateway to Kings Lynn, including active travel and public realm. He explained that the highways aspect needed to be right and it was important to align this masterplan with other strategies being taken forward.

Councillor Collingham referred to the proposed cycle route and it was explained that this would be a lighted junction. It was noted that the

presentation contained artists impressions and more detail would be available once the Highways Scheme was developed.

RESOLVED: The update was noted.

RD23: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

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Councillor Dickinson commented that the Car Parking Strategy had slipped many times on the Work Programme. The Assistant Director commented that there had been challenges in bringing this forward, including capacity issues, but work was now progressing. He also referred back to the comments made by the Portfolio Holder, in that it was important that emerging Strategies all aligned, which had resulted in some delays.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

RD24: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel was scheduled to take place on 10th September 2024 at 6.00pm in the Town Hall.

RD25: **CABINET REPORT - GUILDHALL RIBA STAGE 4 OPTIONS**

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Officers presented the Cabinet report which set out options for the delivery of the St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub project. Information was provided on the options to be considered and the recommendations as contained within the report.

The Panel had also been on a site visit to the Guildhall in advance of the meeting.

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

Councillor Lintern commented that doing nothing was not an option and she supported the recommendations as included in the report.

Councillor Collingham commented that the project needed a more commercial approach and she was surprised that costs had increased so much, although she supported the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, Councillor Ring commented that the original figures were estimates and this report included more accurate costs. He explained that there had also been an increase in ambition and he felt that the business plan was conservative. The Portfolio Holder highlighted the wider economic benefit of the project if it was done right.

The Panel agreed to move into closed session to consider the exempt sections of the report.

RD26: **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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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.

RD27: **EXEMPT - CABINET REPORT - GUILDHALL RIBA STAGE 4**

Officers responded to questions from Members relating to the exempt information contained within the report.

It was highlighted that a further report relating to funding would be presented to Cabinet in February/March 2025.

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

Cabinet resolves:

1. To approve the RIBA Stage 4 (technical and detailed design) development to the 'Full Scheme' to include the renovation of the St George's Guildhall and creation of a Creative Hub as further set out in section 3 of the report, which, if delivered, would result in an estimated overall cost of this Major Project of £20.2m.
2. To approve the Funding Strategy to secure £11.3m as set out in section 4 which will realise the finance required to achieve the Full Scheme, and to endorse advancement of applications to funding bodies.
3. That a report be brought back to Cabinet in February – March 2025 with the results of the Funding Strategy for a decision to be taken in approving the continued progress of this Major Project.
4. To approve the commencement of the procurement process to appoint a main contractor to deliver the Full Scheme, to run in parallel with the Funding Strategy, with an update of the pre-tender cost and funding position for the scheme to be brought back to Cabinet in February – March 2025.

5. Subject to the agreement by the King's Lynn Town Board and all required authorities (e.g. S151 officer agreement), submit a Project Adjustment Request (PAR) (as required under the Towns Fund programme) as soon as practically possible because of changes to the agreed outputs, timings and funding assumptions.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm