

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, 16th April, 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillors Bearshaw (Chair), Beal, Blunt, Bone, Bubb, Crofts, Dickinson, Heneghan and Kemp.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor Beales – Portfolio Holder for Business

Councillor de Whalley – Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity and Climate Change

Councillor Morley – Portfolio Holder for Finance (remotely)

OFFICERS:

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Matthew Henry – Assistant Director

Hannah Wood-Handy – Planning Control Manager

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillor Colwell (remotely)

RD99: **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Collingham.

RD100: **MINUTES**

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

RD101: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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Councillors Heneghan and Beales declared an interest in RD108 as Members of the King's Lynn Town Deal Board.

RD102: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

RD103: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Colwell was present remotely under Standing Order 34.

RD104: CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

RD105: CABINET REPORT - CIL APPLICATIONS REFERRED TO CABINET

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The Planning Control Manager presented the Cabinet Report. It was noted that the CIL Spending Panel had delegated powers to approve and sign off applications up to £50k and those over £50k fell to Cabinet to decide. There was one application over £50k during this round for Cabinet to consider, which was Terrington St John Parish Council – Purchase of former church as Village Hall. £150,000 had been requested.

The Chair thanked the Planning Control Manager for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Vice Chair spoke in support of the application and that it would be a welcome resource for the community. In response to a question the Planning Control Manager confirmed that the Parish Council had supported the scheme with match funding.

The Chair supported the application and stated that a Village Hall Committee had been set up in 2004 and worked hard to raise funds.

In response to a question from Councillor Bone, it was confirmed that the asset would belong to the Parish.

Councillor Crofts noted that there wasn't a village hall in the Village so the application should be supported.

Councillor Blunt asked if there would be any extra costs and it was explained that a reserve fund had been allocated as part of the project.

Councillor Kemp indicated her support for the application, but felt that more should be done for the West Lynn Footpath.

RESOLVED: That the Panel supports the recommendation to Cabinet as set out below:

That Cabinet consider and confirm the applications for CIL Infrastructure Funding.

RD106: WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST

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The Chair informed the Panel that he would like to set up an Infrastructure Informal Working Group. Draft Terms of Reference would be worked up and presented to the Panel in due course. The Informal Working Group would link in with the King's Lynn Transport Strategy and future plans relating to Rail and Housing need.

Councillors indicated their interest in sitting on the Informal Working Group and the Chair explained that any other Members, not on the Regeneration and Development Panel who would like to be involved should contact him.

The Assistant Director commented that the session the Panel had previously, brainstorming ideas, had been useful and comments had been passed onto Norfolk County Council to feed into the King's Lynn Transport Strategy. He welcomed this Informal Working Group to focus on strategy and aspirations for Transport and Infrastructure.

The Panel considered the Work Programme and Forward Decisions List. Councillor Bone asked for an update on Alive West Norfolk proposals to come to the Panel and it was explained that a report was scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in June and the Panel Chairs would decide between them which Panel would be best suited to consider the report.

Councillor Dickinson referred to the 'to be scheduled' items on the Work Programme and asked if these could be programmed in. The Chair agreed to look at this with officers at the sifting meeting.

Councillor Kemp commented that the forthcoming Economic Strategy needed to include Broadband provision and referred to a review of Broadband being carried out by BDUK. The Assistant Director agreed to pass her comments onto the relevant officers and it was noted that the Panel were due to receive an update on the Economic Strategy at their meeting in June.

RESOLVED: 1. That the Regeneration and Development Panel establish an Infrastructure Informal Working Group comprising of Councillors Bearshaw, Bubb, Blunt and Kemp. The Democratic Services Officer to arrange the first meeting of the Group and officers to work with the Chair of the Panel to produce draft Terms of Reference.

2. The Panel's Work Programme for 2024/2025 was noted.

RD107: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel would be held on Wednesday 5th June 2024 at 6.00pm in the Town Hall.

RD108: **RIVERFRONT RIBA STAGE 3**

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The Assistant Director presented the Panel with information on the Riverfront RIBA Stage 3. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Assistant Director explained that the projects included in the presentation were Town Deal funded projects. Project objectives and constraints were highlighted as part of the presentation along with information on how the proposals had been developed in response to feedback.

It was noted that RIBA stage 2 was the concept and RIBA stage 3, which was now being presented to the Panel, contained more detail, but was still subject to further consultation and refinement.

Custom House and Purfleet Quay

After receiving information from the Assistant Director on this element of the project, the Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Chair commented that the use of natural light was good.

Councillor Bone commented that some of his residents were outraged by the use of glazed units and felt that this type of restoration was close to vandalism. He commented that the best use of the Customs House was as a Tourist Information Centre, and this could be enhanced with an additional onsite offer such as retail. He also commented that making the building accessible was a positive, but questioned the removal of historical elements of the building to instal a lift. Councillor Bone also did not feel that the design improved the Purfleet Quay and removed some of the historical assets. The Assistant Director commented that resident and local business consultation events had taken place and there were quite a lot of dividing views and opinions. He explained that discussions were still ongoing with Historic England on the design and pre-app advice had been sought.

In response to questions from the Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan, it was explained that seating would be installed along the Purfleet and would be considerate of the event space. The Anchor and Chain was still under discussion.

Councillor Beal commented that a food and beverage offer at the Custom House would ensure it was sustainable and it would be a desirable location for people to visit. The Assistant Director agreed that it was a perfect area to sit and enjoy food and drinks, but ventilation, extraction and installation of a commercial kitchen was difficult for the Grade 1 Listed Building.

In response to a question from Councillor Bubb, it was explained that the Council did not own the Customs House, but had a lengthy lease, which would be renegotiated and extended as required. It was explained that the owners of the building were supportive of the proposals as they wanted to see the site put to the best use.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, Councillor de Whalley asked what was envisaged for flood defences and it was explained that the design would ensure that the defences were not worse than before.

Councillor Crofts commented that the Customs House was suited for a food and drink offer and asked if there were any restrictions on licences. The Assistant Director explained that this would be a matter for the Licensing Committee to consider at the appropriate time. He also explained that the lease had a 'user clause', which would be discussed with the owner if required.

The Chair asked if five toilets were necessary on the first floor, as this felt a bit excessive. The Assistant Director believed that the number of toilets included in the design were to allow maximum occupancy in the building and was based on demand during events, but he would raise this issue.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was explained that under the lease, the Council were responsible for repairs.

The Assistant Director commented that there were cellars under the building, but they were low in height and would require significant work to make them useable.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Councillor Beales welcomed the wide-ranging discussion and useful comments. He commented that it was important to bring the building back into use to conserve it and that the space needed to be useable, accessible and versatile. He commented that design was subjective, and everyone had differing views, but it was important to conserve and respect the heritage of the building whilst ensuring that the funding allocated through the Towns Fund was spent.

Devils Alley

After receiving information from the Assistant Director on this element of the project, the Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Chair welcomed the proposals to improve this eyesore area and commented that he was pleased that there were no longer any plans for a tower.

Councillor Bone commented that he liked the wide range of events held in the town, but often received complaints from residents. He hoped that these proposals would mitigate some of the problems local residents faced, as it would give more space for vendors. Councillor Bone also commented that he liked the mix of modern and historic proposed design, which he felt would enhance the space. The Assistant Director commented that he hoped the project would make the surrounding site more marketable and perhaps attract a hotel in the area.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the use of steel, the Assistant Director commented that it would likely be a painted structure, but he would confirm.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Heneghan liked the design and felt that it made good use of the space. She asked what would be put in place to deter antisocial behaviour and street drinking and the Assistant Director commented that antisocial behaviour would be addressed and managed by the likely use of CCTV and management by the Public Open Space Team. He also commented that if the space was well used and popular it was less likely to attract antisocial behaviour.

It was confirmed that upkeep of planting and trees would be managed by the Council's Public Open Space Team.

Councillor Bubb asked how the trees would be protected from salt water and the Assistant Director explained that there were voids under the surface which could be filled with soil and would be suitable for mature trees.

Councillor Colwell supported the proposals and was pleased to see an area available for events. He liked the mix of historic and modern design, but was disappointed that flags and banners were no longer included in the design. The Assistant Director explained that the installation of flags and banners had been challenging due to the location falling within a Conservation Area.

Councillor Bubb commented that there was an old Railway Line running under the surface and that this could be exposed as a feature. The Assistant Director commented that there was no funding for this under the current proposals, but this was something that could be looked at in the future.

The Chair suggested that the proposed sculpture, which had a gap in the middle, could be used as a projector displaying images to celebrate the history of the area.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Councillor Beales, thanked the Panel for their comments and that he hoped the project would generate economic activity in the area. He commented that it was important to have aspirations for the future to further enhance the site and that there

may be other opportunities to bid for funding under the Longer-Term Funding for Towns.

Dryside Facilities.

After receiving information from the Assistant Director on this element of the project, the Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

Councillor Bone commented that these facilities were much needed and hoped that they would attract additional visitors and bring in more visiting vessels. The Assistant Director commented that the King's Lynn Conservancy Board had recently rented out some moorings which had brought in additional visiting craft and made the Quay front more vibrant.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Director explained that the facility would be operated by the public open spaces team and would likely be accessed with a fob or key which could be hired, to prevent misuse.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the update.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm