

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel held on Wednesday, 1st June, 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

**PRESENT:** Councillors P Gidney (Chairman), P Rochford (Vice Chairman), Miss L Bambridge, Mrs J Collingham, C Crofts, I Gourlay, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, M Howland, P Kunes, P Rochford, M Shorting and Mrs E Watson

**Portfolio Holders**

Councillor B Long – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health

**Officers:**

Chris Bamfield – Executive Director

Mark Fuller – Principal Project Surveyor

Alan Gomm – LDF Manager

Duncan Hall – Housing Services Manager

Ray Harding – Chief Executive

Ostap Paparega – Regeneration and Economic Development Manager

**RD1: APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Gidney be appointed Chairman of the Regeneration and Development Panel for the municipal year.

**RD2: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Rochford be appointed Vice Chairman of the Regeneration and Environment Panel for the municipal year.

**RD3: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Blunt.

**RD4: MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes from the Regeneration and Development Panel meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

RD5: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Gidney declared an interest in RD11 as he was involved in the project as a designer.

RD6: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

RD7: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor D Pope for items RD10 and RD11.

RD8: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

RD9: **MATTERS REFERRED TO THE PANEL FROM OTHER COUNCIL BODIES AND RESPONSES MADE TO PREVIOUS PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS/REQUESTS**

The Panel noted the response made by Cabinet at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in respect of the following item:

- EXEMPT Report – King's Lynn Strategic Land Acquisition.

RD10: **CUSTOM BUILD AND SELF BUILD POLICY**

The Housing Services Manager and LDF Manager presented the report which set out the implications of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and proposed to establish either a Task Group or Informal Working Group to consider the approaches and make recommendations to Cabinet/Council.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

At the request of Councillor Crofts, the Democratic Services Officer outlined the differences between a Task Group and Informal Working Group to the Panel.

The Panel was informed that the Council had developed an on-line register for those interested in self-build and plans would be prepared to promote the register and its purpose in line with the requirements of the Act. It was confirmed that self-build units would be exempt from Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Chief Executive explained that it was a high priority for the Government to increase the housing supply and this process would assist in achieving this. He reminded Members that they would have influence over the Council's Policy through the establishment of an Informal Working Group or Task Group, which would report back to the Panel with the suggested approach for King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Councillor Pope addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34 and in response to his question the Housing Services Manager confirmed that it was unlikely that the lots would be subsidised, but this would be a decision for Members. The scheme was more about enabling the supply and offering plots. The LDF Manager explained that there were lots of mechanisms to be looked at in formulating the Policy. The Panel was informed that it was compulsory for the Council to have regard to the register and respond to the demand with regard to plot size and type.

The Panel was informed that it was likely that applications would require planning permission in the usual fashion, however there were other options which could be investigated, for example, right to build mechanisms.

The Chairman commented that it was important that appropriate guidance was made available for those interested in self-build projects, for example guidance on HSE regulations, VAT arrangements and the importance of a quality build.

**RESOLVED:** (i) That a five Member Task Group be established and Group Leaders be contacted to ask for their nominations for Members to serve on the Task Group.

(ii) That the Task Group also considers approaches to Starter Homes, and measures to increase the housing supply locally.

RD11: **HLF HERITAGE GRANTS GUILDHALL COMPLEX PROJECT**

The Principal Project Surveyor presented the Report. He reminded the Panel that they had visited the Arts Centre in November 2015 and received a report on opportunities for the site. Since then the Arts Centre had ceased operation and the lease for the premises was terminated on 31 March 2016. The Council had agreed to continue to operate the Visual Arts Service.

Following the closure of the Arts Centre, further consideration had been given to options for use of the site working in partnership with other organisations. The Principal Project Surveyor explained that discussions had taken place with the College of West Anglia who were working with Anglia Ruskin University and the Crafts and Conservation Trust regarding the use of part of the building to accommodate a degree course in Heritage Construction Skills. The course would be

largely practical and could use the Shakespeare Barn or White Barn as a workshop area with office space.

The Panel was informed that visual arts could still be catered for on the site and commercial lets on site would remain. Additional commercial space could potentially be made available.

The Principal Project Surveyor referred to the main proposals for the site as set out in the report which included the addition of a lift, improving the connectivity between spaces and converting the guildhall into a flat floor auditorium with the option of bleacher seats. The Principal Project Surveyor explained that he had had initial discussions with the National Trust and Historic England on the proposals.

The Principal Project Surveyor explained that the Council had registered an interest with the Heritage Lottery Fund and a case officer had visited the site. A written response was awaited from the Heritage Lottery Fund before a bid could be prepared and submitted. The Principal Project Surveyor referred the Panel to the timescales as set out within his report. The Panel was also shown plans of the site as attached.

The Chairman thanked the Principal Project Surveyor for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel as summarised below.

The Panel commented that the design of the lift needed careful consideration so that it was sympathetic to the Heritage of the building and acceptable to the National Trust and Historic England.

The Executive Director confirmed that commercial space would remain and there could be the opportunity to increase the commercial space available through the refurbishment of office space. The Panel was informed that it was hoped that the facility would break even, resulting in a reduction of subsidy provided by the Council. The Executive Director reminded the Panel that previously when they had discussed the future of the Arts Centre the Panel had encouraged an arts offer, underpinned by commercial activity.

With regards to publicity, the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health explained that she had been interviewed by the local media and had consulted with organisations which may be affected by the proposals. The Principal Project Surveyor informed the Panel that as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund application, wider stakeholder engagement would be required.

The Panel was informed that, if the application was successful, a three year activity plan would be introduced and this could be a good opportunity to learn Heritage Skills.

In response to a question, the Principal Project Surveyor commented that work would be carried out to determine if noise would be an issue

from the proposed course which could be accommodated at the Arts Centre and the necessary insulation work would be carried out.

Councillor Bambridge referred to the proposals to remove the seating from the Auditorium. The Principal Project Surveyor commented that the Auditorium currently seated 350. Bleacher seating could accommodate approximately 200 to 280 seats. He felt that the removal of the seats would allow for a greater variety of use.

Councillor Mrs Wright addressed the Panel as the Heritage Champion. She commented that the acoustics would be better in a flat floor area. She asked that historical items be preserved during the works, including the plaques. The Principal Project Surveyor confirmed that sympathy would be given to items of historical importance.

Councillor Pope addressed the Panel under Standing Order 34. He referred to the financial implications. The Executive Director explained that new commercial spaces could be available and the intention was to break even. Finances would be looked at in more detail when the business plan was created.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health, Councillor Mrs Nockolds commented that if the Guildhall seating was removed the space could be used for weddings. She commented that the Town Hall was fully booked for weddings and the Guildhall would be an ideal alternative venue. In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health commented that the Guildhall was hired out on an hourly charge.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Long thanked the Panel for their comments and suggestions and explained that finances would be considered. He hoped that the proposals would result in a reduction of Council subsidy which would be a revenue saving for the Council. The Executive Director commented that the Council was in discussion with the Alive Leisure Trust who were interested in Arts Development in the Borough.

**RESOLVED:** That the Regeneration and Development Panel supports the emerging plans for the development and submission of a Stage 1 Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

RD12: **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**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.

RD13: **DERELICT LAND AND BUILDINGS GROUP UPDATE**

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager provided the Panel with an update on the following:

- The work of the Derelict Land and Buildings Group
- Update on the Waterfront Masterplan
- Townscape Heritage Initiative Update

A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Chairman thanked the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager for his presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Management responded to questions from the Panel. The Panel was reminded that the Council had to be realistic on what could be achieved with the limited resources available in comparison to the amount of derelict buildings. The Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the Empty Homes Policy was due for review shortly and Members would have the opportunity to consider and comment upon the content of the Policy.

**RESOLVED:** The Regeneration and Development Panel noted the update on the three strands of work.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

RD14: **WORK PROGRAMME**

The draft work programme for 2016/2017 was presented to the Panel. Members of the Panel were encouraged to submit items for consideration to the Chairman.

The following items were discussed/identified for possible inclusion on the Work Programme:

- Silica Sand extraction
- Asset Register

**RESOLVED:** The Work Programme for 2016/2017 was agreed.

RD15: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Regeneration and Development Panel was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

**The meeting closed at 8.00 pm**

