

KING'S LYNN ST MARGARET'S WITH ST NICHOLAS' WARD FORUM

A local amenity society working with the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
for a better, brighter, safer King's Lynn

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Cllr Brian Long,
Leader,
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk,
Chapel Street, King's Lynn

19th July, 2017

Dear Councillor Long,

Re: Riverfront Delivery Plan – preferred option

The preferred option for the plan has now been considered by the ward forum and we are pleased that the borough is taking such interest in the riverfront and is seeking to enhance and develop it. However we do have concerns over several aspects of the preferred options and would be grateful if these can be taken into consideration when the cabinet discusses them at its meeting on August 1. This letter has been circulated to cabinet members and officers.

The number of dwellings, services and infrastructure.

Notwithstanding that it is sanctioned in the L.D.F. we continue to contend that the proposed introduction of up to 436 additional 'dwellings' into the area and the consequent increase in the number of residents of diverse demographic would inevitably place a serious strain on schools and medical facilities (as well as on the necessarily supporting infrastructure). It is our understanding that the existing schools are full but the plan makes no mention of the provision of additional places. One of the medical practises – St James - has plans to move out of the area entirely while the other - South Gates – is, in effect, now closed to new patients.

Although development will be on presently vacant land, the immediate area is tightly developed and lacking in amenity for leisure – especially for young families.

We consider, therefore, that the proposed number of dwellings should be treated with caution and be reconsidered and, ideally, revised downwards to a more realistic and sustainable number.

Residential units on land north of Harding's Pits.

The ward forum is **opposed** to the size and scale of the proposed units. They are placed precisely where they will most impose themselves upon Harding's Pits, the green open space to the south, and will affect and block the magnificent views of the historic centre from the whale sculpture on Harding's Pits and the wide expansive views to the river. Those same views must, inevitably, be exploited to the benefit of the prospective residents of the units – and to the detriment of the wider community. The importance of this landscape is such that it has been used in the television series *Coast*.

Affordable and social housing.

We are surprised and disappointed that nowhere does there appear to be provision for affordable and social housing.

Parking

Provision for residents' vehicles must be addressed. Not only will there be the additional vehicles of the new residents, but the plan proposes building on Boal Quay, thus removing long-stay parking places. In addition the intention to further develop the South Quay for leisure activities and events will bring yet more vehicles into the area. Surrounding streets, Nelson Street, All Saints Street and the Friars especially, are lined with parked cars, many of the spaces taken by people shopping or working in the town. This situation will be magnified greatly if parking on Boal Quay is lost.

For all these reasons our previous pleas – completely ignored to date – must be answered, and provision made for existing residents, ideally in the form of a modest multi-storey park. It is our contention also that provision must be made for one vehicle per household for ALL the new dwellings

Harding's Way open to all traffic.

The ward forum remains completely opposed to any changes to the Harding's Way (HW) bus, cycle and pedestrian route to allow access to all vehicles, echoing the view of 77per cent of respondents to the consultation on the delivery plan. Harding's Way borders the important community resource which is the Harding's Pits Doorstep Green. Doorstep greens were set up by national government to provide an essential 'green lung' for urban communities which otherwise lacked such facilities. This is certainly the case for both the Friars area of the town and South Lynn. It is the only area of public open space beside the river which has not been urbanised and where there is a considerable environmental and wildlife element. Since the doorstep green was established there have been continuous moves to erode both its nature and its size. The introduction of buses to HW, which was originally a foot and cycle path, has had a deleterious effect, imposing an unhappy urban element and making the original path unsafe for unaccompanied children and those walking dogs. The vast majority of current users are on foot or cycles (not buses) and it is quicker (and a lot more pleasant) to walk into town from South Lynn via Harding's Way than to drive via London Road. Introducing general traffic will worsen the entire environment. New roads always lead to an increase in traffic and, in addition to the immediate area of the doorstep green, will worsen air quality, congestion and public safety further into the town centre, particularly South Quay, Church Street, Stonegate Street and the Millfleet.

Moreover HW will have to be widened, turning it from a relatively quiet route into essentially what will be a through road with all the attendant environmental draw-backs, including the pollution that roads produce.

Unless major changes are made to the junctions of HW at both ends – onto Boal Street and Wisbech Road - inevitably there will be a build-up of traffic which will back up onto the adjoining roads. We also question which routes traffic will take departing HW. At the northern end will it be directed along South Quay or via the Millfleet to the London Road junction – already seriously congested – and at the southern end into South Lynn and – eventually – Nar Ouse Way and the A47, or via the South Gate roundabout to Hardwick.

Friars Walk

An historic lane of the late 13C, following the line of the former west precinct wall of the Whitefriars Carmelite Friary, this is the only surviving medieval town lane in King’s Lynn and one of the last of such medieval town lanes in the United Kingdom it is *vital* that its historic ambience is maintained. Its importance cannot be over-stressed. Furthermore, it was seminally influential on Sir Guy Dawber PRIBA (1861-1938), co-founder and 1st President of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, who was born and bred in the house on St Margaret’s Place which now serves as St Margaret’s Vicarage. The ward forum is vehemently opposed to any erosion to the ambience and aesthetic of this highly-important lane which appears on all of the town maps of King’s Lynn, from the earliest to the latest.

This was stressed in our response to the consultation and we are therefore considerably aggrieved that the point has been entirely overlooked.

Julian Litten,

Chairman
St Margaret’s with St Nicholas’ Ward Forum

CC Borough Councillors
Ostap Paparega, Regeneration and Economic Manager