

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON MONDAY THE SEVENTH DAY OF JUNE 2004 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor W B Massey (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Acock, Allen, Barron, Beardsworth, Boss, Caswell, Church, Concannon, Crake, Duncan, Edwards, Eldred, Evans, Flavell, Glynane, Hadland, Hill, M Hoare, Hope, Lane, Larratt, C Lill, J Lill, McCutcheon, Malpas, Miah, B Markham, I Markham, Marriott, Mason, Mattjehews, Palethorpe, Patterson, Pritchard, Robinson, Roy, Simpson, Stewart, Tavener, Taylor, Wire, Woods and Yates.

1. MINUTES.

The Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 27th May 2004 were signed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Hoare, Hollis and Perkins.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor referred to a number of music bands that visited the town from Marburg and to the successful D-Day commemoration on 6 June 2004.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.

There were none

5. EXECUTIVE

Held on 19th April and 10th May 2004.

With regard to item 7 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2004, Councillor Church moved and Councillor Allen seconded a motion as to future policy:

"That this Council reaffirms the following from the motion passed by the Council on 23rd June 2003:

1. to consider alternative options that retain the square as an open space
2. to ensure that the brief for the architectural competition is as wide as possible
3. to ensure a comprehensive level of public consultation is carried out culminating in a public vote on the final options.

This Council regrets that the requirements of this policy have not been met.

This Council recognises the urgent need to sustain the economic viability of the market and to regenerate the market square as a public space. To achieve this,

Council called for a public vote between two costed plans for the market square at least one of which retains the whole square as an open space.”

Councillor Barron proposed and Councillor Marriott seconded that the work ‘two’ be deleted from the final sentence of the final paragraph of the motion. Councillor Church accepted this amendment.

The amended motion was duly debated, voted upon and was carried.

6. PLANNING COMMITTEE

Held on 28th April 2004.

A motion that minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

NB Councillor Hill declared an interest in application No N2004/305 and did not speak or vote thereon.

7. COMMITTEE MINUTES.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The meetings of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees: The Leader of the Council, held on 20th April 2004; Community Leadership held on 22 April 2004; Community Safety and E-Government held on 4th May 2004; Financial Strategy and Performance, held on 6th May 2004 and Planning, Transportation and Regeneration held on 1st April 2004 were moved en-bloc and duly adopted.

8. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURAL RULE 5.2.

Councillor Patterson asked Councillor Larratt if he could confirm that the wards of Thorplands, Kingsthorpe, Ecton Brook, Parklands and Boughton Green were still within the Borough. Councillor Larratt confirmed that they were. Councillor Patterson commented that a recent information publication published by the Borough failed to include these wards on a map of Northampton.

Councillor Patterson asked Councillor Larratt what the estimated cost in clearing up the site vacated by the travellers at Round Spinney would be; would the football pitch be in a playable state by the start of the new season; what assurances could he give the people of Golden Ash that the area of Borough Council land adjacent to their properties would not once more be turned into a caravan park and open air toilet; and what exactly was meant by a zero tolerance policy and how was this manifested in the actions of the Council towards illegal encampments? Councillor Larratt commented that the estimated clean up cost at Round Spinney was £1,400 and that the football pitch would be in a playable state by the start of the season. In respect of Golden Ash, Officers of the Council and County Travellers’ Unit were to visit the area to investigate the security aspects and devise a way forward. In terms of the zero tolerance policy, Councillor Larratt commented that the Council had agreed to work with the County traveller Unit and that a meeting had been arranged for 29th June 2004 at which the strategic approach to travellers would be discussed.

9. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Yates moved and Councillor Beardsworth seconded:

“That this Council recognises that the current affordable housing SPG has failed to make an adequate contribution to the housing needs of the Authority. The policy had arbitrary thresholds, which allow developers to avoid making a contribution to our affordable housing needs, and the policy does not enable the authority to influence location and provision of affordable housing where there is the greatest need.

The Council therefore expects the supplementary planning guidance for affordable housing which is currently under consideration to draft a policy which includes:

- Lowering or even removing thresholds regarding relevant sites
- Increasing the percentage contribution of affordable housing on these sites.
- Introducing the option of commutable sums for smaller sites to enable this authority to act as an enabling agent in the provision of affordable housing.

The Authority should aim to have this new SPG in place by 1st January 2005 at the latest.”

Councillor Yates requested that the motion be referred to the Executive.

Councillor McCutcheon moved an amendment and Councillor Boss seconded:

“That the first paragraph of the motion be deleted and the second paragraph be deleted as far as the billet points and that the following be inserted:

“The affordable housing SPG, in rapidly changing times, is due to be reconsidered. The policy should be revised to allow more developers to make contributions to affordable housing needs, and to allow the Authority to influence the location as well as the quantity of the affordable housing so provided.

The Council would therefore expect a revised SPG to carry policies which would include...”

The amendment was duly debated, voted on and carried.

The substantive motion:

“The affordable housing SPG, in rapidly changing times, is due to be reconsidered. The policy should be revised to allow more developers to make contributions to affordable housing needs, and to allow the Authority to influence the location as well as the quantity of the affordable housing so provided.

The Council would therefore expect a revised SPG to carry policies which would include:

- Lowering or even removing thresholds regarding relevant sites
- Increasing the percentage contribution of affordable housing on these sites.
- Introducing the option of commutable sums for smaller sites to enable this

authority to act as an enabling agent in the provision of affordable housing.

The Authority should aim to have this new SPG in place by 1st January 2005 at the latest.”

Stood referred to the Executive.

10. RECOVERY BOARD

The Acting Chief Executive reported on the progress driven by the Monitoring Board which had met twice during the previous week. The interim change Director, T Du Sautoy, had joined the Council and a new management team comprising the Acting Chief Executive, the Assistant Chief Executive, the Interim change Director and an IdeA representative had been established. In the area of housing, investigations were being made to acquire Director level support to help bring the different disciplines together.

The recruitment of the new Chief Executive was underway and the Members’ Panel was scheduled to meet towards the end of July to recommend an appointment for the Council to approve on 29th July 2004.

A fourth version of the Recovery Plan had now been published and the ODPM was due to pass comment on it on 10th June 2004. The Plan was better-presented and simpler than previous versions and therefore would be easier to deliver. It concentrated on three main themes: political management and leadership, cultural change and citizen focused services. It retained the three service themes of previous versions.

The Recovery Board would be member-led and cross-party represented: for each element of the Plan the appropriate portfolio holder, a senior officer and Chair of Overview and Scrutiny would oversee process. The three group leaders, the Interim Change Director and Acting Chief Executive had met the Minister earlier in the day who had set out the level of expectation that was on the Council to deliver the recovery Plan.

The Interim Change Director reported that an exercise of visioning and prioritisation would be undertaken through a framework of Recovery Board Members, Portfolio Holders and the Chairs and Deputies of Overview and Scrutiny with the Senior Management team. This grouping would examine all the Council’s activities with a view to prioritising services and identifying those that the Council would cease to operate. This could be done before the appointment of the new Chief executive and had to be done ahead of the budget cycle commencing in September for 2005/06.

11. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

There were none.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified