

MINUTES

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

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

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

1. MINUTES.

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 8 October 2004 were signed by the Mayor.

Councillor Palethorpe gave an update on item 11 page 282 of the minutes regarding a question he had answered under Procedural Rule 5.2 concerning the maintenance of footpaths and their transfer to the Highways Authority. He briefly outlined the background to the issue and to the fact that there was no dispute on who owned the footpaths but on who actually carried out the maintenance. The meeting that had been rearranged for the 1 November had now taken place and the Borough Council had agreed to send maps of all the land in its ownership to the County to compare with their maps so that the maintenance issue could be resolved. It was hoped that another meeting would take place before Christmas to clarify the position. Councillor Palethorpe undertook to keep members updated with the situation.

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Acock, Flavell, B Hoare, C Lill, and Simpson.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor welcomed Mairi McLean the new Chief Executive to her first meeting of the Full Council.

He then commented that he had just enjoyed a month of Mayoral engagements and referred in particular to the Street Fair.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.

RESOLVED: That Mr C Richardson be permitted to address the Council in respect of the notice of motion (B) on the agenda regarding the recognition of Northampton Citizens.

5. PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 AUGUST AND 15 SEPTEMBER 2004.

A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

NB Councillors Beardsworth, Boss, Hadland and Marriott declared an interest in respect of the application concerning the Derrngate and The Royal Theatre.

6. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The meetings of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Leader of the Council held on 21 September and Community Leadership held on 23 September 2004 were moved en bloc and duly adopted.

7. LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2004 A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2004. In considering the minutes Councillor Barron on behalf of the Labour Group placed on record appreciation to Jon Warlow who had been Acting Chief Executive for his role and efforts in the first steps on the road to recovery by this Borough Council. A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

9. RECOVERY BOARD The meetings of the Recovery Board held on 2 September, 9 September and 7 October were moved en bloc and duly noted.

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

Councillor Patterson asked a question of Councillor Judith Lill as the relevant Portfolio Holder whether she was satisfied with the Council's Performance regarding the annual delivery of black refuse bags to residents. Councillor Lill advised that she was not totally happy with the situation and was looking into this. Councillor Patterson then asked a second question of Councillor J Lill whether she would look into the lack of recycling collections to the residents of Ragsdale Walk in Thorplands and let him know how the department intended to resolve the long standing issue. Again she advised that she would look into the situation and report back on this accordingly.

Councillor Taylor then asked a question of Councillor Hadland as the relevant Portfolio Holder why it was taking so long for vacant shops at 81 Raeburn Road and 123 Milton Street to be transferred to a Housing Association. Furthermore what was the Council doing in the meantime to ensure that these properties did not become a magnet for vandals and a risk to children playing in the area and did he not agree that the time taken to resolve the matter was unacceptable. Councillor Hadland advised that Executive had actually approved the transfer of the properties to Home Housing Association in December 2003 but there had been delays with the Housing Association. Also a fire at 123 Milton Street north had further delayed the issue. However measures had been taken to keep the property safe and secure in the meantime. In response to a supplementary question he advised that he hoped the issue would be completed in the not too distant future.

Councillor Taylor then asked a question of Councillor J Lill regarding the installation of bollards on the Racecourse. She asked why it had taken six months to place concrete bollards at the Pavilion entrance to the Racecourse to prevent cars parking on the grass and would this resolve the problem. Furthermore she asked why the bollards had not been painted cast iron ones rather than concrete. Councillor Lill advised that the bollards should resolve the problem of unauthorised vehicles accessing off Kettering Road although access from the car park onto the grass was still possible although the situation was being monitored and further works would take place as required. Any additional works could involve considerable cost though due to the number of bollards required. A survey of the remainder of the Racecourse was being carried out to replace any other missing bollards. Cast iron bollards were more expensive than concrete ones but investigations were in hand to look at painting the new bollards. Councillor Lill concurred that such structures needed to be aesthetically pleasing and agreed to ensure that Friends of the Racecourse were aware of the situation and would keep members updated on the matter accordingly.

Councillor Wire then asked a question of the Portfolio holder for Transport which was answered in Councillor Lill's absence by Councillor Larratt. He asked when the bus shelter in Duston Road would be replaced with a gallery type shelter in keeping with all the other shelters on this route. Furthermore he asked why Adshell were taking more than the five days as agreed to repair shelters. In the course of Councillor Larratt's response Councillor Wire advised that there had been some confusion as to which particular bus shelter needed replacing and advised that it was actually the one half way between Timken and the Weedon Road. As such Councillor Larratt undertook to look into this and advise Councillor Wire of the situation accordingly. Furthermore Councillor Larratt advised that he would be happy to tour the town with Councillor Wire looking at the various bus shelters. With regard to the length of time being taken to repair shelters Adshell had been advised that the conditions of contract were not being met on all occasions and the Council was working with Adshell to convert all relevant shelters from glass to polycarbonate to reduce vandalism. Should persist vandalism continue the Council would discuss conversion to a Fortress design with Adshell.

Councillor Mason then asked a question of the Executive as a whole which was responded to by Councillor Taverner. Councillor Mason asked whether the Executive supported the building of a skateboard park in Northampton East as people in the area were concerned that one had not yet been provided after 3 years of discussion and consultation. Councillor Taverner gave a detailed response to this question advising that following the Northampton East Regeneration scheme a sum of monies was underspent which the NERS Committee wished to contribute to a skateboard facility within the Blackthorn area where the Casper scheme had been running. However the requirement to meet certain standards was complex and no suitable location could be found within the Casper One area so alternative sites within the vicinity of the Casper one project area had been sought. The current proposed site at Lingswood Park was the only site that complied with the standards within budget constraints. However this site had been met by very strong opposition from the local residents in Lings Park and the nearby school. Overview and Scrutiny Committee 7 had agreed to get involved and look at the consultation process to date.

Councillor Mason in asking a supplementary question was of the opinion that the only opposition was from one road and that in fact there had been a great deal of support for this. She stressed that the monies from Casper and the Northamptonshire County Council would be lost if the works were not carried out in this financial year. She therefore asked that this receive urgent attention and consideration.

Councillor Hollis then asked a question of Councillor Palethorpe as the relevant Portfolio

holder whether he could give an update on the current situation regarding progress in Drayton Walk which had been the subject of a motion of regret passed by this Council back in November last year and again had been raised at Council back in April by Councillor Woods. Councillor Palethorpe advised that he was happy to pass on to members for information updated from a report to the Audit Inspectors dated 28 October 2004. He added that phase 2 of the works was about to commence. Councillor Hollis in asking a supplementary question stated that it had been regrettable that it had been 12 months now since this issue had first been raised and asked for a written timetable of phase 2 of the works. Councillor Palethorpe undertook to supply this.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) Councillor Allen moved and Councillor Church seconded:- "That Procedural Rules be suspended to enable the following motion to be debated.

The motion was carried.

Councillor Allen then moved and Councillor Church seconded:- "This Council notes the results of the East Midlands Big Smoke Debate" involving 24,145 respondents. 88% of those respondents said they would prefer indoor public places to be smoke free.

The Council welcomes the decision of Liverpool City Council to seek the early introduction of a ban on smoking in public places in Liverpool through a private bill in Parliament.

This Council welcomes the work already done through the Northampton Local Strategic Partnership to promote smoke free working environments.

This Council resolves to work with our partners to encourage local businesses to introduce a voluntary ban on smoking in indoor work places.

This Council supports legislation to enable the Council to introduce compulsory ban on smoking in Indoor public places."

At this juncture Mr C Richardson addressed the Council commenting that as a business owner he had a number of premises which operated a no smoking policy and accepted that in some instances there were places where it was not acceptable to smoke. However he did not accept that there should be a compulsory ban as this was an economic and a social issue.

Following some debate on the motion Councillor J Lill moved and Councillor Taverner seconded an amendment which deleted the second paragraph regarding Liverpool City Council and the final paragraph commencing "This Council supports legislation" and insert instead:

"This Council resolves to work with our partners to encourage local businesses to introduce a voluntary ban on smoking in indoor work places.

The Council resolves to work with the Primary Care Trust and the Smoke Free Northants Alliance to support smokers who want to quit and particularly to act as an example of an employer who has introduced smoke free policies into its work places.

The Council endorses the support proposed by the Executive to the Smoke Free Northampton Working Group in order to allow the full implications of the approach to be assessed.

The amendment was duly debated voted upon and lost.

The original motion was then voted upon and carried.

(B) Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Church seconded that Procedural rules be suspended to enable the following motion debated.

The motion was carried.

Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Church seconded:- “This Council wishes to recognise Northampton Citizens who have served this town over many years helping others making a difference in their communities or contributing to the overall development of Northampton.

This Council requests the Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and the party leaders, to prepare a plan to recognise such citizens at an annual event where their outstanding contribution can be formally recognised and celebrated”.

Councillor Miah then moved an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Councillor Lane:- This Council wishes to recognise the contributions of people who live and work in Northampton helping to make a sufficient difference in their communities as well as helping others and contributing to the wellbeing and development of our town.

This Council wishes to build on current events which recognise outstanding contributions in the town and seeks the support of the whole Council including the Mayor in organising an annual event that will be the highlight of our civic calendar.

This Council seeks the support of the Forums, Residents Associations, Area Partnerships and Local media and businesses including the Northampton Celebrate and Town Centre Partnership in seeking nominations and sponsorships for this flag ship event to reward achievements in a wide range of areas.”

Councillor Glynane as mover of the original motion accepted the amendment. The amendment was duly debated voted upon and carried to become the substantive motion.

A vote was then taken upon the substantive motion and carried.

12. HONORARY ALDERMAN

The Leader of the Council referred to the report, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda advising that the purpose at tonight’s meeting was to discuss the principle of the award of Honorary Alderman and not to discuss at this stage individual recipients. He commented that subject to agreement to the creation of the role then a further report back with proposed recipients would be submitted to a future meeting. His recommendation was to this effect.

Following some discussion Councillor Patterson proposed and Councillor Evans seconded “That the question be now put”.

The motion was carried.

Members then voted upon the principle of the creation of the role of Honorary Alderman which was carried.

13. RECENT NOTICES OF MOTION

The Council received a report together with an appendix, copies of which were circulated at the meeting, detailing the progress on recent notices of motion. The report was duly received and noted.

14. RECOVERY PLAN

Councillor Larratt advised that work to the recovery plan annexe was ongoing. Issues such as policy and management leadership needed to be addressed amongst other issues. In terms of performance there were aspects to progress and a separate meeting had been held for this process on 5 November. 3 workshops had been held. One on the 18 October with the IEG, another on 27 October the purpose of which was to engage with the recovery plan and the 4 November which was attended by all board members to discuss prioritisation and initial discussions on risk assessment. Therefore it had been a busy time with a lot of focussed engagement. The ODPM capacity bids had now been approved. Also the housing inspection was now complete and the initial feedback was quite positive. Formal feedback was due in December. It was noted that the next meeting of the Monitoring Board would be held on 18 November.

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

The Mayor announced the following matter needed to be considered under the rules for urgent items and that the Council would need to move into private session by virtue of paragraph 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in order to consider the following report – Changes to the Senior Management structure – Report of Chief Executive, copies of which were circulated at this point. In presenting the report the Chief Executive drew attention to 3 slight amendments the first in paragraph 1.1 which should read “A view” rather than “review”, 3.2 line 3 to read is taking place rather than has taken place and the addition of a fourth recommendation to note the appointment of the consultants.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the recommendations contained therein be adopted:-

- (1) To approve in principle the deletion of the existing senior management posts of Director of Business and Housing Services, Director of Strategic Resources and the Director of Community Services subject to consultation in line with the relevant positions of the National conditions of service for Chief Officers.
- (2) To endorse the creation of 3 Corporate Director roles.
- (3) To note the interim Senior Management arrangements implemented pending permanent appointments to new Corporate Director roles.
- (4) To note the appointment of the external consultants.

The meeting concluded at 2100 hours.