

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON MONDAY THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF DECEMBER 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, M T Crake, Edwards, Evans, Flavell, Glynane, Hadland, Hill, B Hoare, M Hoare, Hollis, Hope, Lane, Larratt, J Lill, Malpas, B Markham, I Markham, Marriott, Mason, Massey, Matthews, McCutcheon, Miah, Palethorpe, Patterson, Perkins, Pritchard, Robinson, Roy, Simpson, Stewart, Tavener, Wire, Woods and Yates

1. MINUTES.

The Mayor moved the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 8 November 2004, Councillor Larratt moved and Councillor Hadland seconded that Procedure Rules be suspended to allow further discussion to Item 13, the Role of Honorary Alderman. The motion was carried. Councillor Larratt then moved and Councillor Hadland seconded, " that the principle of creating the role of Honorary Alderman be confirmed".

Following debate of this issue the motion was carried.

Councillor Perkins then sought an amendment to the Minutes under item 13 Honorary Aderman objecting to the words 'following some discussion' and commenting that there had been no discussion on this issue. Councillor Church then moved and Councillor Hope seconded that the words ' following some discussion ' be deleted from the Minutes.

The motion was lost.

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Council held on 8 November 2004 were then signed by the Mayor.

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Duncan, Eldred and C Lill

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that as usual during the Mayoral Year Christmas was one of the busiest times but very enjoyable and involved meeting many residents of the town. He advised that there would be mince pies in the Mayor's Parlour after the

meeting.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.

Resolved that Mr. Swinn, Mr Green, Mr Adams, Mr Smith, Mr Winder and Mr Westhead be permitted to address the Council in respect of the Notice of Motion 7a on the Agenda regarding Housing Options Appraisal.

At this juncture, the Mayor agreed to vary the order of the business to consider the Notice of Motion as the next item.

7. NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr Swinn, Mr Green, Mr Adams, Mr Smith, on behalf of Unison, Mr Winder and Mr Westhead, Secretary of Kings Heath Residents Association then made their addresses to the Council. All were in support of the Motion as printed on the Agenda and asked that the Council retain its Housing stock.

Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Beardsworth seconded that Procedure Rule 3.4 be suspended to enable a vote to be taken on the following motion:-

The motion was carried.

Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Beardsworth seconded the motion:-

“This Council notes the letter from the Deputy Prime Minister to all Council Leaders circulated by email on the 14 November”.

This Council welcomes and endorses the report of all party House of Commons Select Committee which concluded:-

‘We believe that the target of achieving Decent Homes in the social housing sector is being used as a Trojan horse by the Government in a dogmatic quest to minimise the proportion of housing stock managed by local authorities. The Government must put its money where its mouth is and leave it up to tenants to decide who should own and manage their homes. The Government should provide a level playing field in terms of funding so that tenants and local authorities have real choices’.

This Council regrets that the Deputy Prime Minister has announced, despite the findings of the Select Committee and the vote of the Labour Conference, that the Government is not willing to consider a fourth option for Council Housing which enables local authorities to retain the ownership and management of their housing stock while raising the finance required to meet locally determined housing standards.

This Council requests the Chief Executive to write to the Deputy Prime Minister and the town’s two MPs in support of this motion”

The motion was then duly debated, voted upon and lost.

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES.

(A) OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Meetings of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Community Safety and E-government held on 5 October and 16 November, Financial Strategy and Performance held on 7 October and 17 November, Health and Environment held on 12 October, 2 November and 11 November, Housing held on 14 October and 4 November, Planning, Transportation and Regeneration held on 21 October, Leader of the Council held on the 3 November and Community Leadership on 4 November were moved en bloc and duly adopted. The recommended item of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 4 November regarding the co-option of Liam Costello, Wootton Parish Council on to the Committee was adopted.

(B) EXECUTIVE HELD ON 1 AND 22 NOVEMBER

In discussing the Minutes Councillor J. Lill undertook to give a written response to Councillor Wire regarding Item 7 of the 22 November Minutes regarding the monitoring of Air Quality.

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

NB Councillor Pritchard declared an interest in respect of Item 8 of the 1 November Minutes

(C) LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER

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

(D) RECOVERY BOARD

The meeting of the Recovery Board held on the 4 November was noted.

(E) PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 OCTOBER & 10 NOVEMBER

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

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

Councillor Woods asked for an update on the progress that had been made in developing a travel plan and requested a firm date when a draft would be available for consultation. Councillor Larratt, in the absence of the portfolio holder, advised that the authority were working with the Green Travel Plan Forum which was a group set up to co-ordinate all major employers in the town and were producing travel plans. A meeting had been arranged for the 5 January 2005 to discuss and progress the Borough's travel plans. He undertook to get clear dates etc. sent to Councillor Woods in writing.

Councillor Malpas then asked a question of the Leader of the Council pointing out that he had attended a conference recently run by the Civic Trust entitled 'Good Practice in Managing the Evening and Late night Economy' which raised the issue of a Night-time Town Centre Manager. He asked whether the Leader could give serious consideration to such a post together with a team of evening street workers. Councillor Larratt noted with interest the Conference attended by Councillor Malpas and agreed that if anything could be done to make the Town Centre more accessible to the Community in the evening then this would be a very positive step. Such a suggestion of a NightTime Town Centre Manager and team would obviously have financial implications but he hoped that some positive moves could be made in some way towards this incentive.

Councillor Patterson asked a question of Councillor Edwards as Chair of the General Purposes Committee as to what progress had been made regarding the drinking of alcohol in public restrictions near and around schools and local shops as debated at the September Meeting of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Edwards advised that the formal order on Kings Heath which had been approved by General Purposes Committee in September would be completed and published shortly. Initial notices and consultation had been carried out. Discussions were taking place with the Police in respect of other areas. This was due to the fact that requests for designation had to be actioned by the police.

Councillor Patterson then asked a question of Councillor J Lill, how many black bags was a household entitled to and did she consider the method of distributing black bags to be efficient and environmentally friendly. Councillor J Lill advised that in terms of numbers of black bags she would look into this further and let him know. In terms of the distribution and why the sacks could not be posted through the letterbox she again advised that she would look into this and send a written answer to Councillor Patterson.

Councillor Matthews then asked a question of Councillor Hadland regarding Camp Hill Community Centre, commenting that he understood that there had been problems with the proposed new Camp Hill community Centre. He asked what the problems were, what were the cost implications of them and had the work been put out for competitive tender. He also asked what the likely start and finish dates of the project were. Councillor Hadland advised that the problems related to funding and that at Executive on the 6 December officers had been requested to negotiate an increase in the funding. It was currently proposed that the work would be carried out by the Partnership arrangement with Mears FM and the Contract was competitively tendered during 2003 on a quality and price basis. He elaborated further upon the terms of the contract which had been approved by Executive and Scrutiny. If it were possible to approve the existing scheme it would take up to four weeks for the contractor to mobilise and a further 28 weeks for construction. It was noted that Scrutiny 4 would be receiving a report in January on the first year of the Mears contract together with its place within the Asset Management Process.

Councillor Perkins asked a question of the Mayor whether he would clarify the application of Procedure Rules regarding 'That the Question be Now Put'. The

Mayor advised that the motion that the question be now put derived from the national model code of Standing Orders, originally issued by the former Ministry of Housing in Local Government in 1973 and was a form of closure which must be voted on without debate after it had been moved and seconded, and that it could be proposed at any time. If carried the main motion then had to be put immediately.

Councillor Perkins then asked a question of Councillor Hadland whether in view of the recent triennial actuarial assessment of the pension fund was he satisfied that adequate provision was being made to remedy the pension deficit in the budget year ended 31 March 2006 and forecasts for the two years ended 31 March 2008. Councillor Hadland advised that the Actuary had valued the Northamptonshire Pension Fund as at 31 March 2004 and had recommended employers contribution rates to recover the deficit on the fund over a twenty year period. The rate for 2004/2005 was 299% of Employees contributions which equated to 17.94% of pay. He then referred to the rates recommended by the Actuary and included in the budget for 2005/2006 and forecasts for the years to the 31 March 2008.

8. RECENT NOTICES OF MOTION - TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN FOLLOWING 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. A request was made for a report on Progress on Introductory Tenancies to the next meeting of full Council. The report was then duly received and noted

9. RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE - VERSION 6

Councillor Larratt advised that Version 6 as circulated was the latest update on 5 which had been distributed in July. The Recovery Plan now included a section on Partnerships and the Borough now had a fully accepted Recovery Plan Part 1. Further detailed work was now required to focus on certain areas. Copies of the Recovery Plan and Annex were available on the Intranet. The Monitoring Board on the 18 November had been a very successful meeting and due to this the Monitoring Board and Recovery Board were able to meet on a less frequent basis.

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

The Mayor announced the following matters needed to be considered under the Rules for Urgent Items.

(A) CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2005/6

An extract from the minutes of the Executive held on 6 December 2004 regarding the Calculation of Council Tax Base 2005/2006 together with the relevant report had been circulated setting out the recommendation for the calculation of Northampton Borough Council's Tax Base for the year 2005/2006. The recommendation was

duly adopted.

(B) GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on the 9 December were circulated seeking approval to the recommendation to adjust the existing delegations to officers to formally validate their exercise by the temporary directors in respect of those functions for which they were responsible. The recommendation was duly adopted.

(C) APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE DIRECTORS

The Leader of the Council proposed and Councillor Church seconded that the recommendations of the Appointment Panel to appoint two new corporate directors Mario Abelo and Clive Thomas be approved. This was duly approved by Council. It was noted that a third corporate director was likely to be selected shortly and this would be a recommendation to Council on the 24 January 2005.

The Mayor then moved that the public and press be excluded for the following item on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as was listed against that item of business by reference to paragraphs 1 and 11 of Schedule 12 to such Act

It was noted that the public part of the meeting would resume following consideration of the item.

11. MANAGEMENT REVIEW - TO RECEIVE A REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Councillor Larratt moved and Councillor Hadland seconded for approval the Report of the Chief Executive and Town Clerk on the proposed revised Management Structure together with the Report from Veredus Consultants, copies of which were circulated at the meeting. In moving the Report Councillor Larratt drew particular attention to the Severance Package.

- RESOLVED (1) That the recommendations as set out in the Report be approved
and
the revised Management Structure as circulated be approved
(2) That the Financial implications be noted.

The Public part of the meeting resumed

12. HONORARY ALDERMAN

Councillor Larratt moved and Councillor Hadland seconded that Council Procedure Rule 3.4 be suspended to allow a debate and a vote to take place on the following motion.

The motion was carried.

Councillor Larratt then moved and Councillor Hadland seconded the following motion:-

(A) "That the work of former councillors with twenty years of service or more is celebrated and the gratitude of the citizens of Northampton extended by conferring Honorary Alderman Status upon them (should a situation arise where the full twenty years has been missed by only a few months or other considerations need to be pursued a separate motion will be put before Council at the appropriate time in private session for consideration).

(B) That the Chief Executive make arrangements for a ceremony to confer Honorary Alderman status on those former councillors complying with the terms of motion (a) above to take place to suit the recipients".

The motion was voted upon and carried on a two-thirds majority of those present.

The meeting concluded at 8:55pm