

## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON THURSDAY THE THIRD DAY OF FEBRUARY 2005 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, Duncan, Edwards, Eldred, Flavell, Glynane, Hadland, Hill, B Hoare, M Hoare, Hollis, Hope, Lane, Larratt, C Lill, J Lill, Malpas, B Markham, I Markham, Marriott, Mason, Massey, Matthews, McCutcheon, Palethorpe, Patterson, Perkins, Pritchard, Robinson, Roy, Simpson, Stewart, Taylor, Wire, Woods and Yates

### 1. MINUTES.

The minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council held on 7 and 24 January 2005 were signed by the Mayor.

### 2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crake, Evans and Miah.

### 3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor advised that with regard to this budget meeting previous procedural practice with the budget was being followed but that this would be subject to review and change through Political Structures Review in future.

He then made an announcement with regard to the PA system in the Council Chamber in terms of progress. He advised that wiring would be completed this weekend and that over the next two weeks, training would be given to employees as required. By 25 February, the day of the Council Tax meeting works would be complete and members would be invited to come to the Chamber half an hour earlier prior to the meeting for their training. Willow the consultants would be present throughout that meeting to deal with any issues.

### 4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.

There were none.

### 5. REVENUE BUDGET

#### (A) BUDGET STATEMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Financial Strategy and Performance, Councillor Hadland delivered his budget statement, which he commended, to the Council. Councillor Church on behalf of the Opposition and Councillor Barron on behalf of the Labour

Group then made their comments upon the budget statement accordingly.

(B) COUNCIL BUDGET 2005/06 TO 2007/08.

The Portfolio Holder for Financial Strategy and Performance, Councillor Hadland then presented for consideration the report in respect of the Council's budgets for 2005/06 to 2007/08 (other than appendices E, J, L, P and Q) upon which questions and comments were invited. It was noted that there were no questions or comments.

(C) REVENUE ESTIMATES 2004/05 AND 2005/06.

It was noted that an addendum detailing updates to the Service Delivery Budget report 2005/6 to 2007/8 was circulated at the meeting.

"Councillor Larratt on behalf of the Executive then moved and Councillor Hadland seconded that the Revised Estimates for 2004/05 and the Revenue Estimates for 2005/06 and the Revenue Forecasts for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and the increases in Housing Revenue Account rents and other charges together with the summary of estimates (appendix E and the reviews of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Appendix L)"; in so moving he moved a number of amendments to appendix E as follows:-

"Page 43 –

Other expenditure and income

Executive savings proposals 05/06	-1,719,000 to become -1,769,000
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Executive investment proposals	737,000 becomes 787,000
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0 Under NBC precepts 05/06	-11,660,42 becomes -11,437,720
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Total income	-27,872,363 becomes -27,649,663
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General Fund (C/F)	-2,300,300 becomes -2,077,300
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General Fund Balance C/F 07/08	-2,900,000 becomes -2,190,804"
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At this juncture pursuant to paragraph 3.6.10 of the Constitution the Council adjourned.

The meeting resumed.

Copies of the amended proposals were then circulated and the motion moved by Councillor Larratt and seconded by Councillor Hadland was duly debated and voted upon and lost.

Councillor Church then moved and Councillor Simpson seconded further

amendments which were duly circulated and were as follows:-

#### Additional Investment Proposals

1. To allocate £100,000 in 2005/06 to an anti-social behaviour enforcement and education team to work on additional measures to ensure the prominent enforcement of prosecutions for littering, flytipping, graffiti and other anti-social behaviour and educational activities to support the work of the neighbourhood wardens and graffiti teams.

2. To allocate £100,000 in 2005/06 to a Town Centre enhancement Fund to be spent following bids by the Town Centre Partnership and others on Town Centre projects with a view to securing match funding for projects from other sources. This would make a total of for additional investments of £200,000 for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08. Additional savings proposals were as follows:-.

#### Additional Savings Proposals

To increase the savings to be achieved from the Root and Branch Review from £500,000 to £750,000 in 2005/06 and by £250,000 in subsequent years.

#### Net Additional Savings

Council Tax reduce the proposed increase in 2005/06 from 4.9% to 2.9% at a cost of £223,000 in 2005/06, £236,000 in 2006/07 and £250,000 in 2007/08. The overall effect would be in terms of a reduction in contribution to the General Fund Reserve of £173,000 in 2005/06, £186,000 in 2006/07 and £200,000 in 2007/08.

Councillor Barron then proposed a further amendment as follows which was a joint statement from the three group leaders regarding the Root and Branch review to be included under the additional savings proposal to read as follows:-

“In principle we intend to undertake a Management Review of the authority that will see the replacement of the Heads of Service Role with a smaller number of Corporate Managers and Technical Advisors to support three Corporate Directors. A Root and Branch Review will follow on from this exercise and this will be conducted with all affected staff being given every retraining and re-skilling opportunity where necessary for full redeployment opportunities. Through this process some voluntary redundancy opportunities may become available in the interests of the service.”

Councillor Church duly accepted this amendment. The motion as amended was then duly debated, voted upon and carried.

Councillor Barron then moved and Councillor Marriott seconded some further amendments as follows:-

#### “INVESTMENTS.

(A) NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS – Amend number of new Wardens to employ an additional two to that proposed in 2005/6.

(B) CHARGE FOR BULKY COLLECTIONS – A clean street scene is essential for the recovery of the Council. Delete savings of £50,000 in 2005/6.

(C) ADDITIONAL TREE MAINTENANCE – Increase from £50,000 to £100,000.

## 2. SAVINGS.

(A) REDUCTION IN ABSENCE MANAGEMENT ACTION – Delete “to be determined” and insert with “£50,000”.

(B) POLITICAL ASSISTANTS – Reduce the cost to reflect the reality of “in year” recruitment. Planned for Political Assistants to take post from April 2005, delay employment until 1 September 2005 resulting in a saving of £50,000.

(C) TELEPHONY SAVINGS – Effective management of this budget should provide additional savings of at least £50,000.

3. LINGS FORUM – Any review into the future of the Forum and Cinema will not result in closure.

4. NORTHAMPTON THEATRES TRUST ROADMENDER – Savings in 2006/7 and 2007/8 are a provisional saving. No savings will be made if other funding streams cannot be found.

5. PROPERTY PORTFOLIO – Any review of the property portfolio will not result in closure of the NBC Social Club.”

N.B. Councillors Beardsworth, Boss, Flavell, Hadland and Marriott declared an interest in respect of Northampton Theatres Trust and Councillor Hollis declared an interest as a Board Member of the NBC Social Club.

These amendments were then debated, voted upon and carried.

The motion to formally move the revised estimates for 2004/5 and the revenue estimates for 2005/6 as amended, the revenue forecast for 2006/7 and 2007/8 and increases in housing revenue account rents and other charges was then formally put.

The motion was carried.

## 6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGIC STATEMENTS

Councillor Hadland moved for adoption the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statements which was seconded by Councillor Larratt. Councillor Patterson then moved and Councillor Marriott seconded an amendment that item one on page one the words “and not borrow externally” be deleted This was duly agreed and would be subject to further investigation by officers.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statements be approved.subject to the above amendment.

## **7. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR 2005/06**

Councillor Hadland moved for adoption a report seeking approval to the Prudential Indicators for 2005/6 to 2007/8 which was duly seconded by Councillor Larratt.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the Prudential Indicators as set out in the report be approved.

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

The Mayor advised that there was one Matter of Urgency which was a Position Statement about the organisation of the authority and called upon Councillor Larratt as Leader of the Council to make that statement accordingly.

Councillor Larratt advised that following the interviews for the Heads of Service posts two of the nine posts had been offered. Each Head of Service had subsequently met with their Interim Director and their individual circumstances carefully considered. In all but two areas it was possible to manage in the short term but in those circumstances where this was not the case alternative arrangements were being put in place. Charles Small and Zena Peatfield as Interim Directors would be working alongside the new Directors during the transition period. It was noted that Clive Thomas, one of the new Directors was already in post and that Mario Abelo would be joining the authority on Monday 7 February. The Chief Executive and Directors would continue to meet with staff and roadshows were being organised for the week commencing 7 February at various locations in order to reassure employees and to try to give some clarity in maintaining operations in the forthcoming weeks without Heads of Service in post. The root and branch review had already commenced and the Political Structures Review Group had met and was due to meet again on 25 February for an Away Day to see how things could be taken forward in a more focused way. The remaining seven Heads of Service posts were due to be advertised in the Municipal Journal and it was hoped that the posts could be filled by May. Councillor Larratt stressed that it was a very difficult time for everyone and was grateful for the support of all members.

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.