

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON MONDAY THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF MAY 2005 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Beardsworth, Barron, Boss, Caswell, Church, Concannon, Crake, Duncan, Edwards, Eldred, Evans, 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, Miah, Palethorpe, Patterson, Perkins, Pritchard, Robinson, Roy, Simpson, Stewart, Tavener, Taylor, Wire, Woods and Yates

1. MINUTES.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Leader made a statement regarding the Housing Options Appraisal. He announced that following an initial complaint from the Trade Unions about the impartiality and probity of the Housing Appraisal Consultation Survey carried out by consultants on behalf of the Borough Council the Council had conducted an investigation into the complaint. This revealed potentially serious errors in the data which casts doubts on the report that used the data. As such the Council could not make a decision on the Housing Options Appraisal based on the information and data collected. Unfortunately these events had only come to light at 5.30 this evening. For this reason the report on the Housing Options Appraisal would have to be withdrawn. The Leader apologised for this and assured that action would be taken to rectify the situation and investigations would take place immediately at the highest levels.

The Leaders of the Opposition groups, Councillors Woods and Baron, expressed their concerns and regret over this situation and called for immediate action to be taken.

Councillor Palethorpe as the Portfolio Holder for Housing then made a statement upon the situation reaffirming that the issue would be thoroughly investigated and the outcome made public.

At this juncture the Mayor asked whether any member of the public would wish to speak. Mr Swinn, Mr Adams, Ms S Chambers, Mr H Genus and Mr S Winder indicated that they wished to speak and it was resolved that they would be permitted to address the Council as a result of the announcement just made regarding the Housing Options Appraisal.

Prior to hearing the addresses by the above members of public the Chief Executive reminded the speakers that they would be responsible for any defamatory remarks made against anyone.

Mr Swinn, Mr Adams, Ms S Chambers, Mr H Genus and Mr S Winder then

addressed the Council all expressing their concern and regret over the situation with the Housing Options Appraisal and calling for a thorough and vigorous investigation into the matter to include in-depth consideration by the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

At this juncture the Councillor adjourned for five minutes.

The meeting resumed.

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting held on 7 March 2005 ,amended to include both C Lill and J Lill in the list of those present, were signed by the Mayor.

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Acock, Allen and Flavell.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced for members information that the Corporate Plan had been signed off as agreed by the three group leaders (all three were happy with it) in liaison with the Chief Executive.

He then advised that with regard to items 12 and 13 on the agenda - Monitoring Officer and Delegations to Officers the three leaders and the Chief Executive had taken the decision to extend the decision made at the last Council to this meeting.

4. DEPUTATION/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

(a) EXECUTIVE held on 21 February, 14 March and 14 April 2005.

At this juncture Mrs.McBarrons addressed the Council in respect of item 7 of 4 April minutes regarding the skateboard park facility in Lings Park. She expressed concern over the location of the proposed skateboard park due to the fact that there were many elderly residents in close proximity to the site and the impact that such a proposal would have in terms of noise, nuisance etc Mrs.McBarrons was thanked for her address and her comments were duly noted.

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

(b) PLANNING COMMITTEE held on 2 March and 30 March. A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

© LICENSING COMMITTEE held on 8 March 2005. A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

TREE PANEL held on 23 February 2005. A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

(e) OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES.

The meetings of the following overview and scrutiny committees – Housing held on 13 January, Planning Transportation and Regeneration held on 20 January, Leader of the Council held on 8 February, Community Leadership held on 10 February and Community Safety and E Government held on 22 February 2005 were moved en-bloc and duly adopted.

(f) RECOVERY BOARD held on 10 March and 22 March 2005. The minutes were moved en-bloc and duly noted.

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

Councillor Boss asked a question of Councillor Taverner as the Portfolio Holder. He asked when the skateboard park would be built in Lings Wood. Councillor Taverner referred to the last Council meeting in March when Council unanimously agreed that a skateboard park would be in place by June. A report was subsequently submitted to Executive which was duly noted. She had asked in order to hasten the process that the specialist provider who had installed the Briar Hill skateboard park be used although there were some issues on security which would increase the cost of the contract.

7. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Glynane moved and Councillor Church seconded:- “Noting the influence of the West Northamptonshire UDC on the future of Northampton and its citizens, this Council calls upon the Board of the WNUDC to hold its meetings in public and to openly publish minutes of its deliberations.

This Council requests that the Borough Council representatives on the Board propose and argue for this minimum level of openness.”

It was noted that since the motion had been put things had moved on and it had been advised that meetings would be public.

Councillor Hill then moved and Councillor Malpas seconded that the motion be now put.

The motion was carried.

The motion was then put to the vote and duly carried.

NB Councillors Larratt and Baron declared an interest as Board members of the UDC.

8. HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL

This item was withdrawn

9. RECENT NOTICES OF MOTION

The Council received a report, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda, detailing the progress on Recent Notices of Motion. It was agreed that the motion regarding the skateboard park be taken off this report for future. This was duly agreed. Councillor B Hoare raised the issue of Abington Park toilets and recalled that there was to be a full review of all public conveniences and asked for an update on this. Councillor J Lill undertook to pursue this.

10. RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE

Councillor Larratt advised that David Taylor had joined Northampton Borough Council on 3 May as the Director for Living in Northampton thus making the management team now complete. National advertisement for the Corporate Managers had resulted in a large number of applications. Candidates had now been short listed and interviews would be taking place between the 7th and 10th of June. Those appointed would be likely to take up post by September. Councillor Larratt then gave a brief update on the position regarding the service plan and the new performance management regime which would deliver monthly reports. A recent meeting with Northamptonshire County Council had showed the benefit of developing partnership working and performance management. The Root & Branch Review was progressing well with six of the staff review teams having made their presentations.

11. INTERIM POLITICAL, COMMITTEE AND OTHER MEMBERSHIPS AND RELATED MATTERS

Consideration was given to a report, copies of which had been circulated seeking approval as far as was possible to maintain the status quo with regard to the existing political appointments, committee and other memberships until the next meeting of Council on 27 June 2005 when they would be reconsidered in the light of the political structures review and interim amendments to the Constitution.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the arrangements as set out be agreed with the committee memberships remaining as they are at present with the following exceptions; Councillor B. Hoare replace Councillor Beardsworth on General Purposes Committee. With regard to the vacancies on the Overview & Scrutiny Committees they remain as vacancies for the time being. That it be noted that Councillor Woods and Councillor Glynane be appointed as Leader and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats accordingly.

12. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

Consideration was given to a report, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda recommending that the Council reaffirm the appointment of Francis Fernandes, Chief Solicitor as the Council's Monitoring Officer during the period of the Transitional Authority.

RESOLVED: That the report received and the recommendation agreed.

13. DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS

Consideration was given to a report copies of which had been circulated with the agenda seeking approval as an urgent temporary measure to the further adjustment of the existing delegation to officers.

RESOLVED: That approval be given as an urgent temporary measure to the further adjustment of the existing delegations to officers to formally validate their exercise by the new Directors and/or the relevant current section manager in respect of those functions for which they are responsible.

14. 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 8.45 pm.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified