

MINUTES

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

PRESENT: HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor S.Beardsworth (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Acock, Barron,, Boss, Caswell, Church, Concannon, Crake, Duncan, Edwards, Eldred, Flavell, Glynane, Hadland, Hill,B. Hoare, Hollis, Hope, Lane,C. Lill, J.Lill, Malpas,B. Markham,I. Markham, Marriott, Mason, Matthews, McCutcheon, Miah, Palethorpe, Patterson, Perkins, Pritchard, Roy, Stewart, Tavener, Taylor, Wire, Woods and Yates

1. MINUTES.

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 29 September 2005 were signed by the Mayor.

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evans, Larratt, Massey, Robinson and Stimpson.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor introduced Mr Naji who had been invited to make a short presentation with regard to item 4(a) the Pakistani Earthquake.

Mr Naji stated that £28,000 had been collected from the people of Northamptonshire and thanked the Mayor for offering to become a patron for the Refugee Welfare Council. He also welcomed the idea of twinning with two villages in the disaster area. He stated that there was a proposed visit next year and extended an invitation for Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council representative MP's and the Press to come along to see the magnitude of the disaster for themselves. The Mayor thanked Mr Naji for his address and advised the Council that there would be the opportunity to make a donation to the Disaster Fund with any monies being raised to benefit the adopted villages.

The Mayor then thanked all those who attended the Gala Dinner the previous week which had proved to be successful event and had raised funds for the Mayor's Charities. She also stated that the Charity Fete held on the Saturday had been successful.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.

RESOLVED: That Mr D Francis, Mr Adams, Mr Keown, Mr Swinn and Ms T Matthews be permitted to address the Council in respect of item 7 Notice of Motion on the Roadmender and that Mr Swinn and Mr Winder be permitted to address the Council in respect of item 11 progress on Recovery Plan.

At this juncture the addresses from those who had so indicated were heard.

Mr Francis, Mr Adams, Mr Keown, Mr Swinn and M/s T Matthews then addressed the Council all speaking in support of the motion and asking that the funding be made available. It was noted that a petition with over 7,000 signatures had been obtained in support of the Roadmender.

Mr Swinn and Mr Winder made their addresses with regard to the Recovery Plan. Mr Swinn continued to express concerns that one Scrutiny Committee was not enough commenting that there needed to be at least one Scrutiny per Directorate and referred to the Customer Panel and the fact that this had not been discussed on the Scrutiny work plan as yet or any of the task and finish groups. Mr Winder commented that whilst there was some things that had improved over the last few months with the Council ie Street Care, Landscaping there was still the issue of the supervision of the customer panel that need to be addressed.

At this juncture it was agreed to consider the Notice of Motion under item 7 regarding the Roadmender as the next item.

NB Councillors Hill, Tavener and Glynane declared a non prejudicial interest in this item.

(A) PAKISTANI EARTHQUAKE

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES PARTNERSHIP BOARD - EVERY CHILD MATTERS - PRESENTATION

Council then received a powerpoint presentation from Mr J Barker and Mr P Mason from Developing Services to Children, Northamptonshire County Council. Every child matters sets out a national change programme to build services around the needs of children so that every opportunity could be optimised and risks minimised and formed part of the new children and young people partnership which was Northampton's name for the Childrens Trust a new way of working required by the Children Act 2004. From August 2005 there was a combined Schools and Children and Families service. As part of that service the County Council's priorities for 2005/06 were that more children and young people would get wider opportunities for development especially through extra curricular activities provided by the statutory and volunteer sectors and that more children would be living in stable and supported families. A key theme of the act was working in partnership and the local authority had a responsibility to promote cooperation across all those providing services to children and young people. J Barker then elaborated upon the work of the partnership to date which included forming a children and young persons

partnership board, a monthly newsletter, LSP presentation some workshops etc. The children and young peoples partnership board partners comprised Health, Police, Borough and District Councils Voluntary Sector and School and Governors Youth Offenders Team, LSC, Connexions and Northamptonshire County Council. He then elaborated upon the childrens and young peoples plan which was a requirement of the Children Act 2004 and stated that all Local Authorities and Partners had to produce a joint plan to improve childrens well being in their area. The Plan focused around 5 outcomes; be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being. He then referred to the boards 10 priorities for 2006 – 2009 in the childrens and young peoples plan. As part of the plan there would be joint area reviews the aim of which was to describe what life was like for children and young people growing up in an area and evaluate the way local services taking together contributed to their well being. Following their presentation the issue was opened up for debate and any questions/comments from Councillors. Questions were asked about funding it being noted that any decisions on funding would be made within the existing budget and that there was no statutory requirement for a Local Authority to commit to expenditure. It was noted that the point of the presentation was to bring to the Council's attention the impact the new legislation would have upon this Council. Northampton Borough Council had a clear role and as such needed to determine how to deal with this role and it was therefore suggested that a report be submitted to Cabinet to determine that role. Further consideration in terms of alignment of budgets needed to be given at some point. It was noted that there were no additional monies and focus needed to be therefore made on the 10 key points referred to in the presentation and the importance of the Borough and County Councils working together on housing and Childrens Services was emphasised. Any ideas from Councillors on how this could be worked up would be welcomed.

6. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURAL RULE

5.2.

Councillor Yates asked a question of Councillor Caswell as the Portfolio Holder regarding Upton Interpretation Centre. He asked him whether he could give an update as to why the Upton Interpretation Centre was not yet open for business and available to educate and inform students, developers, planners and members of the public into the state of the art of sustainable building and planning as demonstrated by the Upton Development given that they had been informed that funding had been secured and that the first phase of development was completed and work was progressing on the later phases of development. Councillor Caswell advised that discussions were taking place with English Partnerships as to the best way forward to meet the revenue costs of the Centre. English Partnerships were working with the Council on the appointment of the Consultant from their select list to prepare a business plan for the centre which would identify the costs and income associated with the project. It was hoped to commission the work on the business plan very soon and a meeting with English Partnerships was due shortly to discuss this. It was envisaged that the Business Plan would help the Council to see how best the Centre could be created on a set funding basis until the outcome of the Business Plan was known. It was considered inappropriate to start the construction of the project at present.

Councillor Roy asked a question of Councillor Hadland as to whether he could give details on the cost of commissioned consultancy for 2004/2005 and commissioned consultancy for this financial year to date. Also she asked if he could detail resources spent on consultancy in the same periods of time. She stated that she had asked the same question at the last Council meeting and had received a written response to the question but did not consider this to be adequate. Councillor Hadland then referred to a table of figures which he read out. These included Veredus, Recovery Plan Management Restructuring, the Root and Branch Review etc. The figures totalled £125,703.00 for 2004/05 with the current forecast for 2005/06 being £305,524.00 with as yet no external funding shown. He stated that he could forward the details in writing to Councillor Roy at a later date. Councillor Roy commented that the figures did not include vacancy cover and some detail of that would be appreciated.

Councillor Roy then asked a question of Councillor Miah as to progress in investigating and developing tenant management organisations and when the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be able to give attention to this matter, it was noted that this issue had arisen from a motion to Council back in March of this year. Councillor Miah advised that a report would be made back to Council in March 2006 to report any progress in this respect.

Councillor B Hoare asked a question of Councillor Caswell as the Portfolio Holder regarding the fact that the Government had introduced legislation to help neighbours resolve problems of high hedges and referred to the Mediation UK website which could be used as a first stage to help resolve any disputes. However Councillor Hoare advised that when one of his constituents contacted the Company they were advised that Northampton Borough Council had not commissioned them to provide a service to Residents in the Borough. He understood that other District Councils had linked up with the Mediation Service and asked whether the Portfolio Holder could advise when he would be able to advise residents in Abington of how the Borough Council would be able to assist them with Mediation to resolve their high hedge problem. Councillor Caswell stated that in the time since the legislation came into force no formal complaints had been received requiring further investigation about high hedges under the provision of the act. However, if the Council wished to join the Mediation service then he could have discussions with the Portfolio holder who now had responsibility for this area. Councillor B Hoare undertook to follow this up.

7. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Church moved and Councillor B Hoare seconded that procedural rule 3.2 be waived to allow the following motion to be debated.

The motion was carried.

Councillor Church then moved and Councillor B Hoare seconded the following motion:-

“This Council recognises the major contribution the Roadmender makes to the artistic cultural and social life of Northampton in particular the support it gives to young people and disabled people in developing their musical talents.

This Council deplores the decision of Northamptonshire County Council to withdraw funding of £58,500 from the Roadmender Centre, thereby threatening the loss of a unique facility in Northampton.

This Council requests the Chief Executive to write to the County Council to seek continued support for Roadmender to enable them to build on the marked improvement in attendance and support shown in recent months.

This Council requests the Executive:-

(1) To offer to continue the same level of funding to Roadmender for the next financial year, and offer support to the Roadmender in their efforts to secure alternative funding to enable them to continue to provide opportunities to young people which would otherwise be denied.

(2) To ensure adequate parking is available in the Mayorhold in the evening for Roadmender Customers”.

Councillor Barron then moved and Councillor Roy seconded an amendment to the motion as follows:-

“To insert after musical talents” this Council views the Roadmender as a key strategic partner in delivering the Arts and Culture Agenda in Northampton.

To delete all after “this Council requests” and insert “the Improvement Board and the Cabinet to ensure that the existing level of funding for the Roadmender is present within the draft 2006/2007 budget.

The Cabinet to ensure that in kind support in promoting Roadmender events through NBC publications and other services is maintained and additionally developed.

The Cabinet to offer other support in the Roadmender securing alternative funding.

The Cabinet to ensure that late night parking which is sympathetic to the needs of Roadmender customers is extended to the Mayorhold Shoppers Car Park.

To insert at the end the following:-

“The Improvement Board to undertake an urgent dialogue with the Arts Council to reassesses its involvement in funding for Roadmender to achieve a sustainable level of resources for the facility.

Councillor Hadland then moved and Councillor Miah seconded a further amendment which was considered pursuant to Procedural Rule 6.6 together with the first

amendment. The second amendment was as follows:-

Delete second paragraph and insert:- “This Council regrets the decision of Northamptonshire County Council and the Arts Council to withdraw funding from the Roadmender Centre thereby threatening the loss of a unique facility in Northampton”.

A vote was then taken upon the second amendment and lost.

A vote was then taken upon the first amendment and this was carried to become the substantive motion.

A vote was then taken upon the substantive motion as set out below and carried.

Councillor Hill abstained from voting and asked that this be placed on record.

This Council recognises the major contribution the Roadmender makes to the artistic culture and social life of Northampton in particular the support it gives to young people and disabled people in developing their musical talents.

This Council views the Roadmender as a key strategic partner in delivering the Arts and Culture agenda in Northampton.

This Council deplores the decision of Northamptonshire County Council to withdraw funding of £58,000 from the Roadmender Centre thereby threatening the loss of a unique facility in Northampton.

This Council request the Chief Executive to write to the County Council to seek continued support for Roadmender to enable them to build on the marked improvement in attendance and support shown in recent months.

This Council requests the Improvement Board and Cabinet to ensure that the existing level of funding for the Roadmender is present within the draft 2006/07 budget.

The Cabinet to ensure in kind support in promoting Roadmender Events through NBC publications and other services is maintained and additionally developed.

The Cabinet to offer other support in the Roadmender securing alternative funding.

The Cabinet to ensure that late night parking which is sympathetic to the needs of Roadmender customers is extended in the Mayorhold Shoppers car park.

The Improvement Board to undertake an urgent dialogue with the Arts Council to reassess its involvement in funding for Roadmender to achieve a sustainable level of resources for the facility.

8. CONSTITUTION - MISCELLANOUS MATTERS

Councillor Hadland presented for consideration a report - Constitution and Miscellaneous Matters seeking approval and ratification to various decisions and actions taken by the Improvement Board and Chief Executive. In presenting the report he drew attention to one amendment in that Councillor Lane replace Councillor Massey on the Licensing Committee.

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

1. That the decisions made by the Improvement Board be ratified.
2. That the delegated decisions of the Chief Executive be ratified.
3. That an increase on the seats on Licensing Committee to 15 (total 56 seats to which proportionality applies) be approved.
4. That Councillor Concannon be appointed to the Licensing Committee.
5. That Councillors Palethorpe, Larratt, Tavener, Hollis, Matthews, Barron and Roy be appointed to the Local Joint Committee with one vacancy from the Liberal Democrats Group remaining because Councillor Beardsworth is now the Mayor.
6. That Councillor Lane replace Councillor Massey on the Licensing Committee.

9. OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Hadland presented for consideration the report on Council Representatives on Outside Bodies which sought approval to maintain the status quo as far as possible but where this could not be maintained to appoint Councillors to the vacancies. Councillor Tavener proposed a number of amendments to the report as follows:-

Northampton Borough allotments and gardens Council to replace Councillor Flavell with Councillor M Hoare; Northampton Tourist Association to replace Councillor C Lill with Councillor Caswell, the Heart of England Tourist Board to replace Councillor C Lill with Councillor Caswell, Northampton SRB Partnership Board to replace Councillor C Lill with Councillor Caswell; Town Centre Partnership Board to replace Councillor C Lill with Councillor Caswell, SESAME Panel to replace Councillor Hill with Councillor Caswell, Community Safety Partnership to replace Councillor Larratt with Councillor Palethorpe, Northampton Festival Limited to nominate Councillor Flavell, Urban Commission to replace Councillor C Lill substitute with Councillor Caswell as the substitute, EMRLGA Improvement Forum to replace Councillor

Taverner with Councillor Palethorpe. In addition it was noted that the Sixfields User Group and Northampton Life Long Learning no longer existed.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and that the nominations as set out in the report subject to the amendments referred to above be approved.

10. REMUNERATION PANEL

Councillor Hadland presented for consideration a report seeking approval to disband the Council's current independent Remuneration Panel to establish joint arrangements with Northamptonshire County Council and to refer the current scheme for reconsideration by the new panel.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to:-

- (1) Establish jointly with Northamptonshire County Council an Independent Review Panel which will exercise the relevant functions in respect of both authorities.
- (2) Disband the present Remuneration Panel for the Borough.
- (3) To request the joint Remuneration Panel once it is established to make recommendations to the Council in relation to amending the current members allowance scheme to take into account the new roles and responsibilities arising from the Council's new political structures.
- (4) To request the joint Remuneration Panel to consider backdating any changes in allowances to September 2005.
- (5) To authorise Officers to pay Panel Members their reasonable direct and indirect expenses in considering the Borough Councils scheme.

11. PROGRESS ON RECOVERY PLAN

Councillor Hadland advised that the first phase of the Root and Branch had now been completed as far as the vast majority of work was concerned. He recognised that the Root and Branch had been a very difficult time for all concerned and paid tribute to the cooperation of the Trade Unions and the way in which the staff had conducted themselves during this difficult time. He confirmed that there had been no compulsory redundancies as a result of the Root and Branch. With regard to the skills assessment that had been carried out 2% of the budget had been set aside for skills training and this would be launched in January 2006. Further restructuring would not take place until there was more stability as the impact and affect such things had on staff was recognised. With regard to the Recovery Plan this was now split into six areas, the 3 service areas being benefits, street scene and housing. A traffic light scheme for showing the position of the projects was being used. There

were 3 amber projects namely sickness absence, the consultative database had been delayed and Wakefield Service Development Partnership site visit had been delayed until everyone was in place. The next stage in the CPA process was the interim progress assessment to be carried out in December and January. One example of progress made was with regard to benefits in terms of clearing the backlog of cases.

12. RECENT NOTICES OF MOTION

The Council received a report, copies of which had been circulated detailing the progress on recent Notices of Motion. In response to a query from Councillor Markham regarding the last update back in July on Northampton Citizens which was a subject of a motion in November last year Councillor Palethorpe undertook to liaise with Councillor Markham with regard to this issue.

13. CHANGE OF NAME OF WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Consideration was given to a report advising that a request had been received from Wootton Parish Council to change the name of the Parish Council to Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That the name change of Wootton Parish Council to Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council be approved under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 75.

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

There were none.

The Mayor then announced that from the collection made during the Council meeting for the Pakistani earthquake £247.66 pence had been collected.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 pm.