

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

Monday, 2 July 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor Woods (Chair); Councillor Glynane (Deputy Chair); Councillors Beardsworth, Church, Crake, Hoare and Mildren

### 1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

### 2. MINUTES

There were none.

### 3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

**RESOLVED:** That Mr D Jwanczuk be permitted to address the Cabinet and present a petition on behalf of Pleydell Gardens Residents Association, that Mr C Grethe be granted leave to address the Cabinet in respect of Item 5 (B) – Leisure Services Task & Finish Group and Councillor Malpas be granted leave to address the Cabinet in respect of Item 12 – Options and Appraisal for the Travellers Site at Ecton Lane.

At this juncture Mr D Jwanczuk presented his petition on behalf of Pleydell Gardens Residents Association. He stated that the petition contained some three hundred signatures of residents who were sympathetic to the Birdcage Campaign to make it accessible to all that wished to use it. He stated that use of the alleyway significantly reduced time and distance to Pleydell Gardens. He urged the Administration to withdraw the Officer's statement that whilst there was an alternative route that was accessible to wheelchair users, they were not contravening any discrimination acts and therefore would not be making it accessible (the alleyway) any time soon. He thanked Cabinet for having the opportunity to present the petition and hoped that funds could be made available in the near future. Councillor Woods received the petition on behalf of the Cabinet and advised that he would get Officers to look at the situation again to see whether any improvement could be made and that M Jwanczuk would be updated on the position as soon as was practical.

### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

### 5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

#### (A) OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Simpson presented the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2006/07, which referred to the various pieces of work that had taken place and which were being presented this evening under Items 5(B) to (E). He paid tribute to the work of Backbench Councillors with regard to Overview & Scrutiny and to the fact that Overview & Scrutiny now produced an e-bulletin newsletter and had a dedicated section on the Council's website. He stated that Overview & Scrutiny was working well because of the support it had and there had been feedback from public consultation and other Councils who were now looking to this Council

for information and assistance and copies of our toolkit. Therefore Councillor Simpson considered that Overview & Scrutiny was one of Northampton Borough Council's success stories and hoped that this could continue to be built upon. In presenting the report he paid particular thanks to Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, for her hard work and efforts with regard to the Overview & Scrutiny function. Councillor Glynane echoed these thanks and also thanked the two Vice Chairs, namely Anjona Roy and Councillor Malpas for their support. He added that Overview & Scrutiny reflected real cross-party working as well as a very valuable input from members of the public.

**RESOLVED:** That the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2006/07 be received with thanks to all those who had been involved with its success and it was hoped that Overview & Scrutiny would continue to thrive in its new format.

#### (B) LEISURE SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

At this juncture Mr C Grethe addressed the Cabinet making comment on the Leisure Services Task & Finish Group in stating that he was pleased to see that Lings Forum had been kept open as leisure services were very important to people of this town.

Councillor Simpson presented the Leisure Services Task & Finish Group, which had comprised Councillors Glynane, Eldred, McCutcheon and Simpson with co-opted Member Dr Mike Gillespie, Principal Lecturer and Field Leader, representing the University of Northampton. Councillor Simpson advised that this Task & Finish Group had been set up to review the objectives of the service, to review the extent to which the service met those objectives and to review whether the service provided value for money. The Task & Finish Group looked at what the needs for the provision of leisure were within the Borough of Northampton and the need for a leisure strategy for Northampton. The review was carried out between September 2006 and January 2007. He drew attention to the List of Recommendations outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the report as a result of this piece of work.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received with thanks to the Task & Finish Group and I Redfern and his team, it being noted that Cabinet would be looking at the recommendations in some detail particularly in terms of achievability and budgetary requirements and a report would be made back to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny in the autumn.

#### (C) HOMELESSNESS (ROUGH SLEEPERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Marion Allen, as the Chair of the Homelessness (Rough Sleepers) Task & Finish Group presented the report stating that the objective was to review rough sleepers with the aim to further developing the multi-agency approach to rough sleepers and to reduce/eliminate rough sleeping in Northampton. The Group comprised Councillors Allen, Lane and Pritchard with Co-opted Members Mr Geoff Owen – Town Centre Manager, Mr Charlie Manning – Services Manager (Rehab) and Miss Eileen Kelly – Director Northamptonshire Health Care Trust and Sergeant Matt Phillips – Northants Police. She briefly outlined the work and aims of the Group and to the recommendations as set out on pages 32 and 33 of the report. Councillor Beardsworth then gave an update on actions that had been implemented since the review which included a review of housing advice resources, reshaping housing advice delivery to all customers, the establishment of a rent deposit scheme and a new homeless hostel.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and as with the leisure services the recommendations would be looked at in detail, taking into account achievability and budget and a report would be made back to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.

#### (D) COMMUNITY SAFETY (EVALUATION OF DISPERSAL ORDERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor B Hoare presented the report of the Community Safety (Evaluation of Dispersal Orders) Task & Finish Group stating that this comprised Councillors Church, Simpson and Tavener and that the review was a short focused piece of work that reviewed the implementation of Dispersal Orders since the beginning of 2004. It also sought the views of Council Officers and partners in the Police as to whether this form of intervention had achieved its objectives. The planned outcome of the Task & Finish Group was to add value to existing process and practices, in particular to help Ward Councillors to understand the use of Dispersal Orders and in particular their role. The review was carried out between January 2007 and March 2007. Again there was a list of recommendations set out under pages 13 and 14 of the report.

Councillor Woods was pleased to see this report brought forward as the work resulted from an investigation started by himself and Councillor Mason as members of the old Community Safety and e Govt Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and consideration given to the recommendations again bearing in mind budgetary issues and a report would be made back to the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the autumn

#### (D) STREET SCENE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor Church presented the Street Scene Task & Finish Group report which had been set up to review poor performance indicators on the collection of abandoned cars and to review the new legislation, clean neighbourhoods and environment 2005. Also the Group looked at problems of litter and fly tipping. It was noted that since the instigation of the ELVIS scheme, indicators on abandoned vehicles had improved. It was noted that there were certain areas of the Town where this was a particular problem, ie Wellingborough Road, East Park Parade and Kings Heath. The recommendations of the Group were set out on page 28. In presenting the report Councillor Church also thanked Mr Ingleson and Mrs Percival, two members of the public, who had been part of the Group working on this review. Councillor Crake stated that some of the recommendations were currently being looked at but there were budget implications, one of the main ones being with regard to Enforcement Officers. She added that the recent litter campaign in the Town Centre had been successful and there should be a repeat of this in the future.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and the recommendations noted for further detailed consideration and a report would be made back to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.

#### 6. 2006/07 OUTTURN

Councillor Mildren, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report detailing the position with regard to the 2006/07 Revenue Budget Outturn. It was noted that the final outturn position for the General Fund Revenue Budget Service Expenditure 2006/07 was an under spend of £0.398m against a budget of £35.757m. This was significantly better than the previously report forecasts. He then drew attention to an amendment to the figures under paragraph 2.3 of the report summary stating that it should read, "the most recent projection for the 2007/08 General Fund Revenue Budget indicated a forecast overspend of £921k reducing to £619k should an application to capitalise severance costs be agreed." With regard to paragraph 3.6 Councillor B Hoare asked for an update with regard to the Northgate

System. Councillor Beardsworth advised that a new system from Northgate Systems (formerly known as SX3), was now in place and it had improved the output.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and noted and that the earmarked reserves be agreed.

#### 6(A) 2006/07 BUDGET OUTTURN HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Councillor Mildren, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted the 2006/07 Budget Outturn for the Housing Revenue Account. He advised that under paragraph 2.1 of the summary it should read, "an under spend of £1m rather than £1". He stated that the final outturn position was an under spend of £1.2m.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and noted and that the earmarked reserves be agreed.

#### 7. REVENUE MONITORING TO 31ST MAY 2007

Councillor Mildren, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report stating that this was the first Budget Monitoring Report for the current financial year. He stated that there was a potential over spend of £921,000. It was noted that this was the first of regular monitoring reports, which it was hoped would be submitted in greater detail. Reference was made to 1.3 of the recommendations and paragraph 3.5 under Section 3 of the report which referred to Street Wardens and Park Rangers. It was noted that ways of ensuring a good Park Ranger service was kept in the Town was being looked into and contrary to the suggestion at full Council it was noted that cuts in the Neighbourhood Warden Service were not being implemented.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the report be received and the actions being taken to manage the forecast overspend noted.
  - (2) That a virement of £223,000 from the Improvement Reserve to fund improvements to the Planning Service (£175,000) and recruitment of the Chief Executive (£48,000) be agreed.
  - (3) That a virement of £150,000 from the LABGI Reserve to fund the Street Wardens be agreed.
  - (4) That a virement of £12,000 from the LABGI Reserve to fund Community Safety initiatives be agreed.

#### 8. LAND CHARGES LLC1 FEE

Councillor B Hoare, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report seeking an increase in the LLC1 search fee from £6 to £26. He stated that this related to the development of a Government initiative with regard to the Home Information Packs. He explained that there was no change to the charge for a full search only with regard to the LLC1.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and an increase in the LLC1 search fee from £6 to £26 be approved.

#### 9. BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY HOUSING STRATEGY

Councillor Church, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, presented a report seeking approval to the draft Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2007/11 which was appended together with the Action Plan, copies of which were circulated.

**RESOLVED:** That the Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2007/11 and Action Plan be approved.

#### **10. ITEM WITHDRAN**

This item was withdrawn.

#### **11. SIXFIELDS STADIUM - REQUEST FOR LEASE VARIATIONS**

Councillor Mildren, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report seeking approval to negotiate with Northampton Town Football Club amendments to their lease in terms of Sixfields Stadium. He explained that Northampton Town Football Club were granted a lease by this Council for a term of one hundred and fifty years at a peppercorn rent. Northampton Town Football Club now wished to grant a hundred and twenty five years ground lease of an area of land to a hotel operator for the development of a hotel in return for which Northampton Town Football Club would receive a premium. However the hotel operator was unwilling to take a long sub-lease on the land concerned without there being variations to the terms of the lease. It was noted that this report would be further considered on the private part of the agenda when the figures would be made available.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and noted and that approval be given for Officers to negotiate the terms and submit it to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for a delegated decision.

#### **12. OPTIONS AND APPRAISAL FOR THE TRAVELLERS SITE AT ECTON LANE**

Councillor Crake, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report with regard to Options for the Management of the Travellers Site at Ecton Lane.

Councillor Malpas addressed the Cabinet stating that he had visited the Ecton Lane Travellers Site on a number of occasions and that there were two different cultures living on the site, namely the Romany Gypsies and the Irish Travellers. He asked Cabinet when making a decision to think carefully about what was in the best interest, not only for the Council but also for the residents of the Site. He stated that consultation with residents needed to be carried out with care and consideration and needed to be done on a face-to-face basis rather than sending out forms and questionnaires. He asked Cabinet to proceed with care but with speed with regard to this issue.

Councillor Woods thanked Councillor Malpas for his helpful comments and asked whether he would assist in the consultation exercise in view of his previous involvement with the site and residents. It was also suggested that the County Traveller Unit could be asked to assist with the consultation process and also the Ward Councillors should be kept updated on the position.

The Solicitor to the Council also requested that there be more flexibility in terms of the timing of the lease and that this be amended to between twenty five to ninety nine years.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the report be received and that Option E, Disposal of the Travellers Site at Ecton Lane on the basis of a twenty five to ninety nine year lease

as the basis for securing long term management and maintenance of the Site, be agreed.

- (2) That a formal tender process be commenced to secure long term arrangements by 1 November 2007.

### **13. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

Councillor B Hoare, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a Performance Monitoring report for May 2007. He added that the traffic lights system would be further developed and that indicators would be submitted not only to Cabinet but also to Overview & Scrutiny Committee so that they would be aware of the key indicators for their areas of interest. Councillor Woods commented that the report still showed a lot of red indicators and also a number that stated no data provided. Councillor Hoare advised that this was a one off error and that the data had now been validated and updated. Updates had been issued to Members accordingly.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the Performance report for May 2007 be received and noted.

- (2) That Cabinet approve the revisions to the structure of future Performance reports as identified in this report.

### **14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Chair moved that the public and Press be excluded from the remainder of the business of the meeting 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 such item of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The Motion was Carried.

HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

HOMELESS PREVENTION	When	Endline	Who	Cost	Progress
1. Review Housing Advice resources	May 2006	Appx B	Fran Rodgers	Within existing budgets	Completed - Allocated resources to homeless prevention <del>*</del>
2. Reshape Housing Advice Service delivery to meet the needs of all customers	June 2006	Appx H	Fran Rodgers	Within existing budgets	On-going - Consulted with relevant Managers and new structure costed and timescale agreed February 2007 <del>*</del>
3. Establish Rent Deposit Scheme and housing options toolkit	April 2006 onwards	Appx J	Madeline Spencer	£100,000	Completed <del>*</del>
4. Investigate options for a Sanctuary Scheme	Sept 2006	Appx E	Madeline Spencer	No information available	Completed Launched scheme in November 2006 <del>*</del>
5. Introduce a Spend to Save Strategy	May 2006	Appx D	Fran Rodgers	Nil	Completed <del>*</del>

*General Book update*

**PARTNERSHIP  
WORKING**

	<p>1. Introduce robust partnerships between Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council</p>	<p>By Sept 2006</p>	<p>Appx I</p>	<p>Madeline Spencer/Nigel Stock</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>Completed. Protocols/SLAs in place. Arrangements for 16/17 year olds in place</p>
	<p>2. Introduce effective voluntary sector liaison including the Homeless Forum</p>	<p>April 2006</p>	<p>Appx F</p>	<p>Fran Rodgers</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>Completed - Homeless Forum relaunched in May 2006</p>
	<p>3. Develop a purpose built homeless hostel</p>	<p>March 2007</p>	<p>Appx G</p>	<p>Fran Rodgers</p>	<p>To be advised</p>	<p>Ongoing - Long term aspiration - included in Housing Strategy</p>
	<p>4. Improved engagement with RSLs to assist in housing vulnerable people</p>	<p>May 2006 onwards</p>	<p>Appx A</p>	<p>Fran Rodgers</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>Ongoing - Housing Corporation recent meeting with RSLs</p>



<b>INTERNAL PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES</b>	5. Develop the regional Homeless Strategy	Dec 2006	Appx B	Fran Rodgers	Officer time	On-going – CURS – leading in East Midlands Strategy
	1. Introduce a Corporate Debt Policy	June 2006	Appx JB	Fran Rodgers	Nil	Ongoing – Consultation completed and due to go to SMT January 2007
	2. Introduce new housing IT system	2007	Appx C	Fran Rodgers	Within existing budgets	Ongoing – Project Board established implementing modules from April 2007
	3. Introduce sign-off procedure for evictions	May 2006	Appx D	Madeline Spencer	Nil	Completed
	4. Sign-off procedures for Temporary Accommodation	May 2006	Appx D	Madeline Spencer	Nil	Completed

	5. Review all internal processes and procedures to ensure SMART working	By Jan 2007	Appx C	Fran Rodgers	Nil	Ongoing – Voids performance is a key priority impacting on homelessness
<b>TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION</b>	1. Value for money and high quality accommodation provision	By Sept 2006	Appx A	Madeline Spencer	£500,000 within existing budgets	Completed - Draft temporary Accommodation Strategy developed
	2. Temporary Accommodation Strategy	June 2006	Appx D	Madeline Spencer	Nil	Completed
<b>VULNERABLE PEOPLE</b>	1. Learning Disability Strategy	Oct 2006	Appx 1	Madeline Spencer	Nil	Ongoing – Working with the ordinary living group
	2. User Consultation Strategy	June 2006	Appx C	Fran Rodgers	To be advised	Ongoing – Developed service standards for Housing in consultation with NTACT DCLG roadshow Nov 2006

X

	Homeless awareness training for staff	Ongoing	Appx A	Madeline Spencer	Within existing budgets	Completed
	4. Develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy and responsive service	June 2006	Appx B	Fran Rodgers	£90,000 ODPM funding	Ongoing - Rough sleepers group relaunched June 2006. Task & Finish group - established November 2006