

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON MONDAY THE TWENTY SIXTH DAY OF MARCH 2007 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor C Lill (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Allen, Barron, Boss, Caswell, Church, Conroy, Crake, Edwards, Eldred, Evans, Flavell, Hadland, Hill, B. Hoare, Hope, Lane, Larratt, J. Lill, Malpas, I. Markham, B. Markham, Marriott, Mason, Massey, Matthews, McCutcheon, Miah, Palethorpe, Patterson, Perkins, Roy, Simpson, Tavener, Taylor, Wire, Woods and Yates

1. MINUTES.

The minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council held on 13 and 21 February, 1 and 15 March 2007 were signed by the Mayor,

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Acock, Beardsworth, Duncan and Glynane.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Barron on the birth of a baby daughter the previous week.

He then called upon Councillors Woods, Barron and Hadland as Leaders of the three political groups to pay tribute to those members of the Council who were retiring and would not be standing in the forthcoming local elections. Councillor Woods paid tribute to Councillors Allen and Hope, Councillor Barron paid tribute to Councillors Pritchard and Wire. Councillor Hadland noted that Councillor Barron would not himself be standing for election and paid tribute to him and for his work as leader of the Labour group. He then paid tribute to Councillors Stewart and Massey from his group who would not be standing for election.

The Mayor then announced a couple of events for the Mayor's Charity; one which was taking place on 29 April at Balti King in Earl Street which was a buffet costing £11.00 per head and the second was on Friday 4 May at the County Cricket Ground and was an evening of entertainment with a band and concert.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. QUESTION TIME

There were none.

6. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

At this point each of the Cabinet members made a presentation on their respective portfolios. Councillor Hadland in addition to the update on his portfolio which had been circulated with the agenda circulated a statement with regard to the approved local development scheme and Sixfields in light of the recent press regarding this issue and which he read out. He advised that he was making the statement in order to clarify the position concerning Sixfields and the football club. His statement read as follows:-

“The Borough Council is required by Government to prepare the plans for future growth of Northampton. The local development scheme is the programme for this work which has to be approved by Government.

The Council submitted a draft LDS in December 2006, jointly with South Northamptonshire and Daventry Councils. This draft included an accelerated timetable for Sixfields. The Government office were not prepared to approve the programme and directed us to reconsider.

They instructed the Councils to reduce the number of documents and identify the resources needed to achieve the timetable. An independent facilitator worked with the Councils and GOEM to produce a revised programme and this was approved by a special meeting of the Cabinet on 15 March in order to meet the Government’s deadline of 31 March. Failure to comply could have placed significant Government funding at risk, reducing the Council’s ability to pay for the planning officers and resources needed to complete the process. The programme is now acceptable to the Government office and they approved it the following day.

We were not legally permitted to work on the joint core strategy, which is the overall plan at the heart of the process, until the new programme was agreed and brought into effect.

The core strategy will include policies about the scale and broad location of future retailing and the development of the town centre and district centres and will set the criteria required to decide future development at Sixfields. The preferred options will come forward before Christmas to go to public consultation early next year.

Ideally the future development of Sixfields will come about through a joint initiative by all the interested parties based on the core strategy principles. The planning of the district centre on this basis could go ahead next year, culminating in a planning application.

I have already met with the club and other interested landowners and I welcome their co-operative approach in driving this process forward. This has the potential to assist significantly in the action plan process for Sixfields. We are all keen to ensure that the Cobblers go from strength to strength and have a secure basis for future prosperity.”

At this juncture Councillor Marriott requested that procedural rules be suspended so that the Council could debate an emergency motion with regard to Sixfields that was

being put forward in his name and seconded by Councillor Wire. A vote was taken on the request to suspend procedure rules and was lost.

Members then asked questions regarding the statement and his portfolio update.

Councillor Hadland then made his presentation referring to the two day community enabling fund meeting that had taken place. Two amendments to the budget had resulted in a significant effect on the distribution of the community enabling fund. He then also touched upon sickness absence, pay and grading review and community safety.

NB Councillor Roy declared an interest in the part of the presentation dealing with CEFAP as a member of Northampton Race Equality Council.

Councillor Flavell then presented her portfolio update touching on culture and leisure, Northamptonshire Waste Partnership, recycling, trade waste, property management, Development and Building Control and Environmental Health.

Councillor Caswell then presented his portfolio commenting that GOEM had now accepted the Borough Council's Housing Strategy as being fit for purpose. He also touched upon the Local Development Framework, Foot Meadow's Regeneration, the Economic and Regeneration Strategy and Town Centre Operations.

Councillor Larratt then presented his portfolio update referring to the Street Scene and Parks and Open Spaces, Legal and Democratic Services, Community Centres and the Money 4 Youth initiative. With regard to Brookside Community Centre, Councillor Pritchard asked whether the meeting to discuss the various options for it could be held before she retired from the Council. Councillor Larratt stated that he would get the Corporate Director to pursue this and to try to set up a meeting within the next week.

Councillor Miah then gave an update on his portfolio. He covered issues including the move of the Housing and Money Advice Centre from Fish Street to the Guildhall, Choice Based Lettings, Allocations Review, Sheltered Housing Review, Rough Sleepers Task and Finish Group, Travellers and Customer Pledge. In response to a question he gave assurance that there would be additional rooms available for families so that they could be interviewed in a sympathetic way following the move of the Housing and Money Advice Centre into the Guildhall.

7. REVISED SEVERANCE SCHEME

Councillor Palethorpe presented the report seeking implementation of the Early Retirement/Severance Scheme.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Council adopt and implements the attached Early Retirement/Severance Scheme as shown at Appendix 1 for implementation from 1 April 2007 as recommended by Cabinet on 5 March 2007.
 - (2) That the Council adopts and implements the attached Statement of Discretions (Appendix 2) for implementation

from 1 April 2007 as recommended by Cabinet on 5 March 2007.

8. MEETING CYCLE

Councillor Hadland presented the report which had been circulated seeking approval to the meeting cycle for 2007/08. It was noted that the Area Partnerships had been changed to become the new Neighbourhood Partnerships. It was anticipated that further information regarding these would be forthcoming in future.

RESOLVED: That the meeting cycle for 2007/08 be approved.

9. PLANNING DELEGATIONS AND PLANNING PROTOCOL

Councillor Flavell presented the report seeking amendments to Part 8 of the Council's Constitution regarding Delegations to Officers Planning (Development Control). It was noted that agreement in principle only was being sought. Comments were made regarding the consultation process and the importance of member training for Planning and Licensing Committees was stressed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Part 8 of the Council's Constitution be amended in respect of the Scheme of Delegations to an "exceptions based" approach to delegated development control decisions as set out in the report and that such amendments be formulated and submitted to a future meeting.
- (2) That the arrangements as detailed in the report be followed in relation to consultations on planning applications submitted to West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.
- (3) That an amendment be made to the Scheme of Delegations as contained in the Borough Council's Constitution to include the words under Delegated Authority to the Corporate Manager (Regeneration, Growth and Community Development):-
"Responses to the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation on Planning Applications for which they are the determining authority where this would not prejudice the policies and provisions of the development plan or have any other strategic consequences, including its impact on or prejudice to the Council's strategic corporate priorities".
- (4) That Planning Policy and Conservation write an explanatory note on the provisions for community consultation in the light of WNDC receiving and processing applications directly and the Borough Council's approach to responses by 1 June 2007 to accompany the Council's adopted statement of community involvement.

NB Councillor Larratt declared an interest in the above item as a member of the WNDC.

10. APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE - INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Hadland presented the report, copies of which had been circulated

seeking approval for the appointment of a Corporate Director to the role of Head of Paid Service as on a three month rotating basis as outlined.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the recommendations from the Employment Committee regarding this issue be noted.
 - (2) That approval be given to the appointment of a Corporate Director to the role of Head of Paid Service on a three month rotating basis with an automatic vacation of the role thereafter.
 - (3) That it be noted that the role will be known as the Section 4 Statutory Officer.

11. PROGRESS ON RECENT NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Hadland presented a report detailing the progress on recent Council Notices of Motion.

- RESOLVED:** That the report be received and noted.

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

- RESOLVED:** That the following be considered as a Matter of Urgency due to the undue delay if consideration of it was deferred:-

APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER.

The Solicitor to the Council declared an interest in this item and left the meeting whilst it was under discussion.

Councillor Hadland presented the report, copies of which had been circulated seeking appointment of the Electoral Registration Officer who was responsible for carrying out the statutory function of preparing, maintaining and publishing the Register of Electors for the Borough.

- RESOLVED:** That the appointment of the Solicitor to the Council as Electoral Registration Officer be approved.

The Mayor concluded the business of the meeting stating that this was his last Council meeting as Mayor and wished all those that were not standing the very best for the future.

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.