

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON THURSDAY THE TWENTY FOURTH DAY OF MAY 2007 AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

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

COUNCILLORS: Beardsworth, Caswell, Church, J. Conroy, R. Conroy, Crake, Davies, De Cruz Duncan, Edwards, Flavell, Glynane, Hadland, Hill, B.Hoare, Hollis, Lane, Larratt, J. Lill, Malpas, B.Markham, I. Markham, Mason, Matthews, Palethorpe, Perkins, Simpson, Tavener, P. D Varnserry, P. M Varnserry, Woods and Yates

1. ELECTION OF MAYOR.

Councillor Davies proposed and Councillor Woods seconded that Councillor "L Mason be elected Mayor of the Borough of Northampton for the ensuing year." The motion was carried and Councillor L Mason was appointed Mayor and accepted office by making and delivering to the Solicitor to the Council the declaration of acceptance of office.

The Mayor then took the Chair.

2. VOTE OF THANKS TO OUTGOING MAYOR AND MAYORESS.

Councillor Larratt proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded "that the thanks of the Council be given to Councillor Colin Lill and Councillor Judith Lill for the able and courteous manner in which they have discharged their duties as Mayor and Mayoress during their term of office". The motion was carried.

3. MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN.

It was noted that the Mayor will have a variety of Chaplains throughout the ensuing year.

4. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR.

Councillor Garlick proposed and Councillor B Hoare seconded "that Councillor B Markham be appointed to the office of Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year". The motion was carried and Councillor B Markham was appointed Deputy Mayor and accepted office by making and delivering to the Solicitor to the Council the declaration of acceptance of office.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 26 March 2007 were signed by the Mayor.

6. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Hoare.

7. LONG SERVICE. TO RECORD THE LONG SERVICE OF THE FOLLOWING EMPLOYEES:-

The long service of those employees shown in paragraph 7 of the agenda be noted with appreciation.

8. ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS.

The return of the election of Councillors for 23 wards of the Borough as set out in the schedule circulated with item 8 of the agenda was noted.

9. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor R Conroy proposed and Councillor Crake seconded "that Councillors Woods and Glynane be appointed Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council respectively for the ensuing year. The motion was carried.

10. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE MAIN OPPOSITION GROUP

Councillor Malpas proposed and Councillor Lane seconded "that Councillors Hadland and Palethorpe be appointed Leader and Deputy Leader of the main opposition group respectively for the ensuing year. The motion was carried.

11. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR GROUP

Councillor Scott proposed and Councillor Choudary seconded "that Councillor Davies and Councillor Capstick be appointed Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Group respectively for the ensuing year. The motion was carried.

12. COUNCIL MEETINGS

RESOLVED That the Annual and Ordinary Meetings of the Council during 2007/08 be held on the dates shown in paragraph 12 of the agenda with the exception of the meeting scheduled for 25 June which would now take place on 28 June 2007.

At this juncture the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 hours.

The meeting reconvened at 12:28 hours and the Mayor announced that the meeting would remain further adjourned until 19:00 hours on 25 May 2007.

Reconvened Council Meeting 25 May 2007.

PRESENT: Her Worship the Mayor Councillor Mason and Councillors, Beardsworth, Capstick, Caswell, Chaudhury, Choudary, Church, Clarke, Collins, J Conroy, R Conroy, Crake, Davies, De Cruz, Duncan, Flavell, Garlick, Glynane, Hadland, Hawkins, Hill, B Hoare, Hollis, Lane, C Lill, Malpas, B Markham, I Markham, Matthews, Meredith, Mildren, Palethorpe, Reeve, Scott, Simpson, Tavener, Taylor, P M Varnsvery, P D Varnsvery, Wilson, Woods and Yates.

APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Edwards, M Hoare, Larratt, J Lill and Perkins.

13. POLITICAL STRUCTURES.

The Leader of the Council submitted a report and commented that clearly the Council must improve. The proposals contained within it were designed to help bring about this improvement by making changes to the way in which Cabinet was appointed; a bigger and improved role for Overview and Scrutiny; creating an Appointments and Appeals Committee and a General Purposes Committee; to change the Scheme of Delegations to members to enable Cabinet Sub-Committees to be created and to put in place a guillotine for Council meetings at 9.30pm.

Councillor B Hoare seconded the recommendations set out in the report and commented that their effect would be reviewed after six months.

Concern was expressed at the lack of consultation in respect of the proposals contained in the report and at the curbing of public access to Council meetings. Concern was also expressed in respect of the proposed 9.30pm guillotine at Council meetings although it was noted that this could be waived at any meeting if the circumstances so justified it.

Comment was made that the proposals were designed to make decision making more efficient and effective and were not intended to suppress debate. The expanded role of Overview and Scrutiny was in line with Government Best Practice Guidance.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote there voted:

For the motion: Councillors Beardsworth, Capstick, Chaudhury, Choudary, Church, Collins, J Conroy, R Conroy, Crake, Davies, De Cruz, Garlick, Glynane, Hawkins, B Hoare, Hollis, B Markham, I Markham, Matthews, Meredith, Mildren, Scott, Simpson, Taylor, P M Varnsvery, P D Varnsvery, Wilson, Woods and Yates.

Against the motion: Councillors Caswell, Clarke, Duncan, Flavell, Hadland, Hill, Lane, C Lill, Malpas, Palethorpe and Reeve.

Abstained: the Mayor.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council makes the following changes to its executive arrangements and to its political structures:

- (1) That the Leader be given the flexibility to appoint (and remove) the Members of the Cabinet within the statutory limits of a minimum of two and a maximum of nine; and for the Leader to determine and allocate the portfolios for himself and the other Cabinet Members. Any changes under this head will be reported to Council for information.
- (2) That there be three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and a Scrutiny Management Committee as described in Section 5 of the report.
- (3) That there be an Appointments and Appeals Committee with the terms of reference set out in Section 6 of the

report.

- (4) That there be a General Purposes Committee with the terms of reference set out in Section 7 of the report.
- (5) That there no longer be a Tree Panel as a Committee of the Council; and that the functions of the Tree Panel be transferred to the Planning Committee.
- (6) That the Council's Guidelines for Open Government be amended in respect of Cabinet meetings by the introduction of a requirement that persons wishing to address Cabinet must register their intention to do so by 12 noon on the day of the meeting and by having an overall time limit of thirty minutes during which all such addresses must be made, with powers for the Chair to vary the requirements according to the circumstances.
- (7) That the Cabinet is empowered to set up Committees of the Cabinet according to its needs which can have delegated powers to take executive decisions.
- (8) That the Scheme of Delegations for Members be simplified as described in Section 3 of the report, together with a simplification of the associated protocol.
- (9) That the Solicitor to the Council make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution to accord with the changes set out above, and that a further report containing the Constitutional changes be brought to the next Council meeting.
- (10) That the Constitution, as amended, be reviewed in twelve months' time by a working group to be set up at a future meeting.
- (11) To note that structures currently in operation and not amended by this report will continue in their current form.
- (12) That amendments to the Constitution allow the guillotine at Council meetings to fall at 9.30pm.

14. COMMITTEE PROPORTIONALITY

The Leader of the Council submitted an amended report that had been circulated and Councillor B Hoare seconded its adoption.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to the number of seats on each Committee as detailed in the report and that the representation of the political groups be as set out in the report.

15. CABINET

RESOLVED: That the Leader of the Council, Councillor Woods be the Chair of the Cabinet and that the Cabinet members be Councillors Beardsworth, Church, Crake, Glynane, B Hoare and Mildren.

16. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

The Leader of the Council submitted a report and referred to the addendum that had been circulated and which showed an increase in the membership of the Audit Committee to seven seats and the General Purposes Committee to nine seats.

RESOLVED: That subject to the addition of Councillor Hawkins to the membership of the Audit Committee and to Councillors Clarke and Collins to the membership of the General Purposes Committee and that Councillor Clarke be added to the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny 1 Committee; the appointments to Committees be approved.