

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

Wednesday, 18 January 2012

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mackintosh (Chair); Councillor Caswell (Deputy Chair);  
Councillors Bottwood, Eldred, Hadland and Markham

### 1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> December and the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2011 were signed by the Chair.

### 3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

David Huffadine – Smith addressed Cabinet on Item 8 – Community Governance Review. He welcomed the report and commented that the work of Parish Councils was wide ranging and positively impacted the local communities. He commented that Parish Councils could undertake numerous tasks under their powers and that they encouraged a sense of responsibility and community in Parishes.

Peter Jones addressed Cabinet on Item 8 - Community Governance Review and commented that he was speaking on behalf of an application for a new parish council in West Hunsbury. He stated that there were great advantages to having Parish Councils and there was no reason for certain areas to be deprived of the privilege.

Jill Pickard- (secretary of the Northampton Skatepark Action Group) addressed Cabinet on Item 7 – Community Forums Report. She commented that she appreciated the work that the forums had done and promoted their use of social networking sites for the promotion of events. She reported that there were a number of young people who becoming disenfranchised by the democratic process and referred to the recent proposed delay in the provision of a skate park in Northampton. She reported that there was a lot of frustration among members of the group and questioned why there were delays in the process.

The Leader commented that he understood the frustrations of those affected by the delay to the developments to the Skatepark. He commented that a number of developments were concurrently running at a fast pace and that sometimes it had proved necessary for changes to be made. He stated that he wished for developments to proceed as promptly as possible and that there was a commitment to the Northampton Skatepark.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Portfolio Holder commented that he had only recently become appreciative of the cumulative issues around the proposed area for the Skatepark. He stated that his concerns had arisen from the impact of the proposed site and the junction improvements to enable the regeneration of the Avon/Nunn Mills site. The reduction of the green area was the principle concern. He reported that the relocation of the skate park would maintain a meaningful expanse of open space. This larger area of space could then continue to be used for town events. Whilst the Dragon Boat Festival had been referred to him this event was never affected by the original site plan. Councillor Hadland regretted the delay. .

Norman Adams addressed Cabinet on Item 11 – HRA – Self Financing Business Plan. He

commented that the report contained a number of uncertainties and expressed his unhappiness that the Council would be 'lumbered' with an historic debt. He commented that any increase in rents would have a knock on effect especially those in receipt of housing benefits who would suffer severe financial hardship.

#### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Caswell and Hadland declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 6 – Duston Community Centre – Transfer to Duston Parish Council, as members of Duston Parish Councils.

Councillors Caswell, Hadland, Eldred and Bottwood declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Item 8 – Community Governance Review, as members of Parish Councils.

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

There were none.

#### **6. DUSTON COMMUNITY CENTRE - TRANSFER TO DUSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Councillors Hadland and Caswell left the room in accordance with the Declaration of Interest as set out in Item 4 above.

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report. He commented that the transfer of the freehold of Duston Community Centre to Duston Parish Council would be a positive transition as the Parish Council was well respected in the community having delivered a wide range of services and demonstrated the value of Parish Councils.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the transfer of the freehold of land and buildings known as Duston community centre (shown edged red upon the attached plan) to Duston Parish Council be approved, subject to (a) appropriate title restrictions to protect this Council's financial interest and to achieve the objects of the transfer and (b) approval of a suitable business plan.
2. That authority be delegated to the Borough Solicitor to sign the freehold transfer agreement in accordance (as appropriate) with the Community Centres Policy Framework and the Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2012-2015 on the Council's behalf.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet member for Community Engagement and Director responsible for Community Engagement to approve the business plan and financial forecasts for the operation of the Duston community centre, to be prepared by Duston Parish Council and Duston Community Association.

Councillors Hadland and Caswell rejoined the meeting.

#### **7. COMMUNITY FORUMS REPORT**

Nathaniel Vilette – a member of Northampton Youth Forum addressed Cabinet. He explained that the Forum had received national recognition for the work undertaken with regards to the Stamp out Hate Crime campaign. He commented that extensive work had been carried out with a wide range of groups from schools and educational groups to BBC Radio Northampton and encouraged the support and continuation of the work carried out by the Forums in Northampton.

Councillor Edlred, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report and thanked Nathaniel

for his contribution and address to Cabinet. He commented that he welcomed the continued work of the forum and was encouraged by the public participation at the various Forums.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the work and achievements of the Forums was recognised and welcomed.
2. That the role of the Forums in assisting the Council to meet its duties on equalities and consultation, particularly under the Equality Act 2010 was recognised and endorsed.

**8. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Councillor Oldham addressed Cabinet and commented that he was pleased that the residents of West Hunsbury were being given the opportunity to establish a parish Council and emphasised the need for the Parish Council to be favourable for residents.

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and questioned what the financial implications would be in establishing new Parish Councils and asked if other democratic structures could be explored as an alternative to Parish Councils.

The Leader commented that the report dealt with the establishment of the process and not the intricacies.

Councillor Eldred, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report and invited Councillor Stone to Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council to see how it was run and outlined the contents of the report.

The Chief Executive explained that the Governance Review was in its first stage and that further information would be provided to Councillors on the matter.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Chief Executive be delegated, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Community Engagement, authority to agree the use of necessary resources and the making of reasonable expenditure for the undertaking of a borough wide Community Governance Review, in particular the meeting of those costs associated with the options for determining community support for new or amended parish council arrangements.
2. That any necessary ballots as a result of the Community Governance Review be held at the same time as the Police and Crime Commissioner election to be held on 15 November 2012 in order to minimise costs.

**9. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report. He commented that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a new system, which worked alongside the Joint Core Strategy, of collecting monies from developer contributions to fund cross boundary infrastructures. He reported that Section 106 had restricted affectivity and that CIL put in place a mechanism to charge a levy on individual authorities.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposal to implement a way forward for introducing a CIL for West Northamptonshire which will entail the Council endorsing the following, be approved;

- The introduction of the outlined governance structure referred to in this report and detailed in Appendix A of the report
- The recognition that each partner authority will be a charging authority in their own right
- The setting up of cross partnership officer joint working groups as set out in paragraph 3.1.15 of this report
- The establishment of a cross partnership Infrastructure Steering group
- The opportunity to provide for cost sharing between authorities by providing a joint approach to CIL to address infrastructure delivery issues across the whole of West Northamptonshire

## **10. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT/INTERIM POSITION**

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and commented that she had recently been made aware of distressing circumstances faced by people with housing needs and questioned whether there were any preventative measures to assist people experiencing difficulties with private landlords.

The Director of Housing commented that there were severe housing needs and that there were measures that could be taken to assist people in the private sector and a wider response would be given.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report and commented that the report contained recommendations to update the current document, which would help to address to housing needs of the people of Northampton. He stated that there was continued work with planning and housing officers to reduce housing stock problems.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the draft Northampton Affordable Housing Interim Position Statement (as shown in Appendix 1 of the report) for consultation was approved.
2. That the finalised draft document prior to its adoption would be used to inform the Council's position in discussions with developers and Daventry District and South Northamptonshire Councils with regards to affordable housing provision in development within the Northampton Related Development Area was agreed.

## **11. HRA - SELF FINANCING BUSINESS PLAN**

Councillor Markham, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, submitted a report and explained that the Localism Act would abolish the current financial framework for housing finance. The 30-year plan was a necessity in order to deliver a new council housing finance regime from April 2012. She reported that work would continue on bringing homes up to a decent standard, extra council houses would be built and that progress would be made on ensuring that improvements to heating would continue to be a priority. It was noted that the Business Plan would be reviewed regularly.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan attached in the appendix of the report be approved, and delegated authority be granted to the Director of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio holders for Housing and Finance to amend following the issuing of the final debt settlement by Government in January 2012.

The meeting concluded at 18.46