

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

Monday, 10 May 2004

PRESENT: Councillor Larratt (Chair); Councillor Hadland (Deputy Chair); Councillors Hill, Palethorpe and Tavener

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors C Lill and J Lill

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 19 April 2004 were signed by the Chair

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Resolved: That Mr D Jones be granted leave to address the Executive in respect of Item 7 "Market Square Enhancement Project: Public Consultation"

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None

6. AN URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FOR WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE; A DECISION DOCUMENT (LC, PRT)

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk submitted a report that set out the ODPM's response to the Consultation Paper "Sustainable Communities: An Urban Development Corporation for West Northamptonshire". He further commented that the advert for the Chairman of the Board had been placed and that in terms of representation one place was being ring-fenced to the Council but that any number of Councillors could be put forward as nominees. It was intended to arrange a presentation for all Councillors about the UDC and how it might interact with the Council.

Councillor Larratt commented that Lord Rooker's letter gave some reassurance. However he expressed concern that a similar situation as appeared to be developing in Thurrock should not happen in Northampton. The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk commented that it was vital that the UDC worked with the Council and that the Council was seen as an equal partner. He noted that the documentation to the Board Candidates indicated that all planning decisions within the UDC remit would be taken by it, although the nature of the remit had not yet been established. It also mentioned seconding Officers locally but this should not be to the detriment of the delivery of the Council's services.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7. MARKET SQUARE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT; PUBLIC CONSULTATION (FS)

Mr Jones, a shopkeeper in Northampton, commented that he had lived in the Town for some 25 years and had witnessed many changes in that time. He referred to a report that had appeared in the Chronicle and Echo in 1962 at the time that the fountain was removed from the Market Square. He quoted from it in respect of comments about it being a fine open space and the Town's forefathers being excellent town planners. He commented that the Market had first been established in 1245 and that he did not wish it to develop the same as Milton Keynes. In his view it should be kept as an open space for displays events etc. and

any kind of canopy would be a home for pigeons and would look shabby after a relatively short period of time. He felt that the general public had been poorly consulted and protested at the Public Consultation arrangements. Mr Jones was thanked for his address.

The Director of Business and Housing Services circulated a report that set out the results of the architectural competition and the public consultation exercise. He commented that the Council had adopted a vision; the competition had been funded by EMDA; and a judging panel had judged that Option A should be the winning Scheme.

Councillor Hadland commented that the enhancement of the Market Square was never going to be an easy decision to make and that the Architectural Competition had been held because there was merit in seeing what ideas would come forward. There was also a need to do something for the Market Hall Traders which was a pressing situation. Six concepts had been submitted from an original 41 expressions of interest and the judging panel had been mainly concerned with finding a winner to the competition. However, no one scheme provided a comprehensive answer and the favoured option amongst the Panel was for essentially Option A with elements of Option C. This would not compromise the open nature of the Market Square with only about a third of its area being covered but would provide a facility for the fish and meat market and would provide an element of cover in poor weather conditions. At the same time it could be argued that the roofing element was not essential. In respect of the open market there were other factors that needed to be borne in mind as in recent years it had declined at about 6% per annum which might bring into question the size of the market, product range offered and the publicity of it.

Councillor Larratt congratulated all the entrants and stated that it was accepted that no change was not an option and that an alternative facility for the fish and meat market needed to be addressed urgently. He further stated that on a personal basis he was devastated by the winner design and could not support any form of cover or permanent structure on the market square. He felt that the better proposal was to link the Market to the Cultural Mile proposal and that this opportunity should be used to bring the Market Square back into community use. He also cast doubt on the validity of the public questionnaire exercise in that there had only been 700 respondents.

Councillor Hill commented that he had been heartened by the winning proposal and liked the idea of the collapsible stalls as proposed in Scheme C. It was clear that a solution to the Market needed to be found.

It was also noted that greater public engagement would be desirable on what was such an important decision for the Town.

A discussion then ensued upon the recommendations as tabled in the report.

The meeting adjourned at 19.00hours and reconvened at 19.16hours.

- Resolved:
1. That Letts Wheeler Architects be congratulated on winning the Market Square Enhancement Competition
 2. That in consultation with all the Council's stakeholders including possible funding partners, the Town Centre Partnership, the Market Traders Federation and the public of Northampton, the wealth of ideas arising from the architectural competition be expanded upon to seek an urgent solution to the trading crisis in the Market Hall, the sustainable future of the open market and the public use of this historic square.

8. HIGHWAYS AGENCY- ARRANGEMENTS WITH NCC (PRT)

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk commented that a proposed report to the County Council's Executive on 25 May had been circulated to District Councils within the County for comment. The report indicated that the County Council intended to end the Agency agreements for local planning and highways advice with the District Councils. He had made an objection and the County Council in writing had indicated that this report would now be deferred until 29 June 2004. He was aware that the other Districts in the County had lodged similar objections. The issue was about advice that could be given as part of a comprehensive service. District Councils faced increasing pressure from GOEM for faster response times to applications and this would be slowed down significantly if advice had to be sought from the County Council.

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk commented that he and the Leader of the Council had met with the Chief Executive and Leader of the County Council the previous week where this issue had been raised and they had been given an indication that the County Council were reviewing their initial position.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

9. SHAPING PATTERNS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES (PRT)

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk submitted a report summarising the contents of the Sir Michael Lyons review of public sector relocation. Northampton had been highlighted as a potential relocation site and the review identified around 20,000 jobs that could be relocated from London. It was noted that the timescale for the proposals, about 10-15 years, would fall into line with the work of the UDC.

- Resolved:
1. That the contents of the Lyons report and its potential implications on Northampton be noted
 2. That work with the County Council be undertaken to report jointly to Office for Government Commerce on the Councils willingness to enter into partnership to accommodate any relocation proposals.

10. RECOVERY PLAN: RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (LC, FS)

The Director of Strategic Resources submitted a report that set out the resource implications of the Council's Recovery Plan, the funding that was available and also gave an early indication of the 2003/04 Revenue Out-turn position and projected shortfall in resources for future years based on current service levels. He particularly commented on the position of the Superannuation Fund and the actuarial valuation the results of which would be known by the Autumn.

Councillor Hadland commented that he had met with the Department of Works and Pensions the previous week and they were keen to build on the work started by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate and had indicated that assistance with the funding would be forthcoming.

Resolved: That the report be noted and that the need to balance the cost of recovery with the need to address newly emerging budget issues in the projected budget shortfalls in coming years be accepted.

11. ITEM WITHDRAWN

12. NORTHAMPTON ACADEMY- LAND ADJACENT (FS)

The Director of Strategic Resources submitted a report that followed up the public advertisement of the disposal of an area of public open space adjacent to Billing Brook to the Northamptonshire County Council. There had been no public objections.

Recommendation: That the freehold transfer of approximately 2.75 hectares of land adjacent to Billing Brook and the Northampton Academy site to Northamptonshire County Council be approved.

13. DISPOSALS/ LETTINGS PROTOCOL (FS)

The Director of Strategic Resources submitted a report commenting that the Financial Strategy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the Disposals and Lettings Protocols with one amendment that disposals at nil consideration should be on the basis of a long lease. This amendment had been made to the Disposals Protocol.

Resolved: That the Disposals and Lettings Protocols be approved.

14. DISPERSAL- DEALING WITH INTIMIDATING GROUPS (CSE)

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk submitted a report which advised the Executive of Chapter 38 Sections 30-36 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in respect of the dispersal of groups and the removal of persons under 16 to their place of residence.

Councillor Taverner commented that the Community Safety and E- Government Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and supported the use of Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in appropriate situations. A Protocol for its use was to be developed with the Police.

- Resolved:
1. That the Council supports Northampton Police in the implementation of Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
 2. That a formal Protocol be drawn up between Northampton Borough Council and Northampton Police but that this not delay implementing the provisions of the Act in the meantime should this become necessary.

Rec That the Council's Constitution be amended in
om respect of Part 8, Delegations to Officers, so that
men the Chief Executive, Borough Solicitor or any
ded Director be authorised to give the Council's
;
**Consent to the issue by a relevant Police Officer of
an authorisation under Part 4 of the Anti-Social
Behaviour Act 2003**

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

The Motion was Carried.

16. APPROVAL OF MARKETING OF LEISURE CENTRES (HE)

The Director of Community Services submitted a report that set out a draft Marketing Brief that had been drawn up with Humberts Leisure. He noted that the full details of each site would be included with the Brief and he elaborated upon the favoured options. It was also noted that a master planning exercise in Lings area was to be undertaken involving the County Council, PCT, Tesco, Focus, Lings Academy and Emmanuel School.

The Acting Chief Executive and Town Clerk commented that in respect of any potential future development of Danes Camp that the Brief should be adjusted to read "maximum redevelopment value subject to planning approval".

- Resolved:
1. That subject to the views of the Health and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee approval be given to the draft Marketing Brief for the Leisure Centres set out in Appendix A of the report, and as amended, and that Humberts Leisure be instructed to proceed accordingly
 2. That the funding of the Consultants fees and Marketing costs as scheduled in Section 3 of the report be approved.

17. CLIFTONVILLE HOUSE IMPROVEMENTS (FS)

The Director of Business and Housing Services submitted a report setting out the reasons for the overspend on the refurbishment of the Cliftonville House. He further commented that it highlighted the need to properly fund accommodation works. It was also noted that the Financial Strategy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a review of the Corporate Capital Strategic process and a report on this would be made to the Executive at its next meeting on 24 May 2004. This would also include Members involvement in the process.

Resolved: That the report be received.

18. ITEM WITHDRAWN

19. GERALD EVE CONSULTANTS (FS)

The Director of Strategic Resources submitted a report that set out the terms for Gerald Eve's continued involvement in work associated with the Joint Initiative Sites transferred to English Partnerships i.e: Sixfields, Harvey Reeves Road and Ransome Road

Resolved: That approval be given to the continued appointment of Gerald Eve in relation to on-going matters relating to the Joint Initiative Sites with English Partnerships

The meeting concluded at 20.16 hours

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