

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

Monday, 11 October 2004

PRESENT: Councillor Larratt(Chair); Councillor Hadland(Deputy Chair); Councillors C.Lill, J.Lill, Palethorpe and Tavener

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hill.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 September 2004 were signed by the Chair.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That Councillor Matthews be granted leave to address the Executive on item 5 - Issues Arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
 - (2) That Councillor Markham be granted leave to address the Executive in respect of item 13 - Review of Waste Implementation Plan.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Consideration was given to a report, copies of which had been circulated, resulting from the calling in of the Executive decision of the 5 July regarding Far Cotton Recreation ground. Councillor Marriott, as the Chair of the Financial Strategy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report. He went through the report in detail outlining the reasons for the call-in and the findings and recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee accordingly. He stated that from the eight concerns listed the Executive had been able to demonstrate that it had successfully considered six of the concerns. Nine recommendations and reasons were listed which Councillor Marriott went through in some detail. He suggested that members of the Executive give further thought to these so that a considered response could be made at the next meeting accordingly. He drew particular attention to recommendation 9 as this had a particular bearing on the lease and conditions that applied. He asked the Executive to provide a formal response using the template as previously agreed by the Executive and come back at a later date.

At this juncture Councillor Matthews addressed the Executive. He advised that he was a member of the call-in team that prompted the report. He commented that two points had not been adequately addressed ie the lack of a management plan for the recreation ground and lack of consideration on the public open space issue. He then referred to the need to reposition one of the cricket pitches, which had cost implications and suggested that maybe

an approach should be made to the County Council with a request that it provide a new pitch in another position. In response to a question he stated that with the development of the new Community Centre this would provide better facilities and changing accommodation which in turn would lead to increased usage of the facilities including the cricket pitches.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the report of the Financial Strategy and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received and the recommendations contained therein be accepted.
 - (2) That in connection with recommendation 9 the issue of Public Access be further discussed with the Northamptonshire County Council.
 - (3) That members of the Executive, through the Portfolio holder and supported by an officer appointed by the Acting Chief Executive, give further reasoned consideration to the recommendations so that a report can be made back to the Executive accordingly.
 - (4) That the Borough Solicitor be authorised to proceed with the advertising of the disposal of the Public Open Space and consideration of any objections.

6. RECOVERY PLAN (LC)

The Acting Chief Executive advised that over the next few weeks it was necessary to get members on board to work towards the delivery of the recovery plan. One of the key issues was revenue and benefits performance which was continuing to be monitored closely. It could be reported that performance in this area was stronger than it had been last year and a lot of the pending paper work had been dealt with. However this had led to a slight detriment in the performance figures last month so it was very important to ensure that the figures were stronger this month. The new Chief Executive was expected to be in post and present at the next meeting of the Executive. Good progress had been made on the appointment of the Interim Directors and the three posts for the permanent Directors had been advertised accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the position and progress be noted.

7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (PRT)

RESOLVED: That consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT 2004/05- 2006/07 (FS)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Strategic Resources and Business and Housing Services seeking approval to variations in the Corporate Capital Programme for 2004/05 to 2006/07 as outlined. The report essentially summarised the present position of the current Corporate Capital Programme and highlighted the main areas of variations and adjustments.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and that the variations to the Corporate Capital Programme as outlined be approved.

9. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (FS)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Strategic Resources detailing the outcome of the Budget Monitoring Exercise undertaken at the end of period 5 which gave an

update on the current revenue financial position and the Council's key medium term corporate priorities. In addition to the report three separate notes were circulated at the meeting. The first was a replacement paragraph 2.2.1 which advised that at the end of 2004/05 the General Fund Reserve was projected to be £2.057 million which was £126,000 higher than forecast when the Executive received its Revenue Overturn report on the 14 June 2004. The second note listed the key medium term Corporate Priorities and was an amended draft from the prioritisation seminars held at Sedgebrook Hall. The third was details of various savings options and investment options. The Director of Strategic Resources then went through the report in detail including the five appendices A to E. Appendix A was the summary of the general fund. Appendix B noted the variations. Appendix C requested a number of new variations to the budget. Appendix D noted the revenue budget contingency and Appendix E gave further details on the recovery budget. Appendix F which was circulated at the meeting and headed up Key Medium Term Corporate Priorities showed the updated priorities from the September workshop at Sedgebrook Hall as mentioned above. In considering the report it was noted that it showed a shortfall of £3 million pounds but attention was drawn to the possible affect the Gershon review could have on this shortfall which could result in a £3.5 million or £3.7 million shortfall. It was noted that under consultation the Overview and Scrutiny Committees had played a significant role in the budget process particularly Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4 which had suggested that maybe 3 or 4 major issues could be selected which it would prepared to examine in detail and offered to undertake such work should the Executive so wish.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the recommendations contained therein as set out below be approved:-

- (1) That the closing balance projected for 2004/05 on the General Fund given in the General Fund summary attached to Appendix A be noted.
- (2) That the need to implement proposals for budget reductions by April 2005 in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy be endorsed.
- (3) That the variations in budgets agreed under delegated powers or by the Executive since the Revenue Outturn Report was presented on the 14 June 2004 listed in Appendix B be noted.
- (4) That the Revenue Budget variations listed in Appendix C be approved.
- (5) That the Revenue Budget contingency statement attached at Appendix D be noted.
- (6) That the Recovery Budget Statement attached at Appendix E and the allocations made under delegated powers be noted.
- (7) That the revised key medium term Corporate Priorities included in the attached appendix.

(A) SUMMARY OF BUSINESS CASE FOR UNICLASS UPGRADE

The Director of Business and Housing Services submitted a report advising that IT Support for the Landlords Maintenance Function was currently supplied through a combination of two systems namely UNICLASS and HREP. The former system supplied job costing works ordering bonus calculation and limited support for repairs appointments whilst the latter provided a repair ordering interface and a limited facility for holding property information. Both systems had limitations in terms of a customer service environment and ultimately the ongoing FISH project would replace all Housing Management Systems. However this was a complex project and full implementation was not expected to take place before October 2007. As such it was being suggested that in the interim the existing UNICLASS system be

retained whilst the HREP system be replaced with new software known as ENTERPRISE, a package which bolted onto the existing UNICLASS core and was supplied by the same software vendor. The benefits of this were outlined in the report and it effectively filled the time gap prior to the implementation of the FISH project. Members expressed concern as to the compatibility of the software with the one stop shop facility and the County Portal.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and approval in principle be given to the purchase the new ENTERPRISE software subject to the Acting Chief Executive being satisfied that the system addresses members concerns regarding facilitating a One Stop Shop approach.

10. GROSVENOR/ GREYFRIARS (FS)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Strategic Resources, copies of which were circulated at the meeting, giving an update and advising of the latest discussions between the representatives of Legal and General and the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted and that Donaldsons be requested to present their detailed analysis and recommendations to members and Senior Officers as soon as possible.

11. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT- IEG 4 STATEMENT (CSE)

The Director of Strategic Resources gave an update on the current position regarding the IEG 4 statement. He advised that the IDeA was in the process of reviewing the Borough's process in relation to meeting the IEG targets and that IEG 4 submission was required to be submitted to the ODPM by midnight on the 20 December. It was noted that the IEG 4 submission was to get priority outcomes and that the IDeA would facilitate a workshop with members of the Overview and Scrutiny 3 Committee and Recovery Board members. It was further noted that the submission had to be done electronically. On a wider IEG point it was noted that the launch of connect 2 the Northamptonshire Community portal had taken place that day and a note giving details of this initiative was circulated for information. It was noted that Councillor Taverner had attended the launch as the relevant Portfolio holder which she advised had been well represented by the Borough Council.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

12. CASPER- CHOICE OF NEXT AREA (CSE)

This item was withdrawn.

13. REVIEW OF WASTE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HE)

Consideration was given to a report reviewing the recycling scheme and Waste Implementation Plan. In addition a chart showing accumulative recycling between the 1 April and 1 October 2004 was circulated which showed that after six months the Borough was holding onto a 31% recycling rate and as such would be meeting its statutory target this year.

At this juncture Councillor Markham addressed the meeting in his capacity as Chair of the Health and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He advised that this Committee had started its own review of the recycling scheme and was looking at several aspects, one of which was what had been implemented so far rather than the future of the scheme. The Committee was also looking to see if the scheme had been meeting targets and it was clear that this was the case and providing very good value for money. He was of the opinion that

the scheme was a great success and considering the huge changes that had come about as a result when it was first implemented the initial disruption had been unavoidable. He commented that there were still some problems and issues and these would be discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting the following evening. He stated that he supported the report as circulated for further future improvements to the scheme. In discussing the report the comment was made that it was necessary to ensure that recycling was taken fully into account in any new developments and it was noted that there was in fact a requirement for details of external storage for waste and recycling material on all new developments. Another point raised was the request that with the implementation of this further phase it would seem only fair to cease the 75 pence charge for garden refuse from those without wheelie bins. It was noted that there would in fact be a further report on this issue and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would possibly be looking at this aspect as well. The Chair on behalf of the Executive congratulated all those involved with the success of the recycling scheme.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the improved recycling rate of 31% be noted as well as the fact that this is in excess of the Authority's Statutory obligation (24%) and is a result of the implementation of Stage 1 of Northampton Borough Council's waste statutory implementation programme.
 - (2) That approval be given to bring forward the plans to roll out the twin wheeled bin scheme from 2006/07 to 2005/06. This will enable the Council to take advantage of the DEFRA funding (£540,000) currently available through the Northamptonshire Waste Forum and that a further report on the implementation programme be submitted accordingly.
 - (3) That it be noted that the required revenue funding is included in the base budget which will sustain the expanded scheme year on year.

14. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (PRT)

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive and Town Clerk regarding the Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan together with the issues paper upon which consultation was being sought so that a response could be submitted to the County Council accordingly. It was suggested that the Borough Council makes its response framed around issues that the multi module study had established. The response was required to be submitted to the County Council by the end of October and the suggested way forward was that this be done in conjunction with the Portfolio holder based upon the contents of paragraph 1.7 of the report and any further observations which Members may wish to make. Members in considering the issues paper made several comments. The condition of cycle ways was referred to and the need to improve them was an issue that needed to be taken on board. Also reference was made to the various County Council's junction busting schemes and comment was made that members would be concerned if the St Peters Way roundabout was replaced with a concrete box. Also the need for the Plough Junction improvements to go ahead was stressed. Bus interchanges in the Central Area was another issue that needed to be discussed with the County Council.

Comment was made that there was a meeting of the Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee within the next few weeks and that it might be appropriate to take this document to that meeting for consideration as part of the response.

- RESOLVED:** That the report and above comments be noted and a response to the issues paper be formulated for submission to the County Council accordingly subject

to agreement with the Portfolio holder and subject to the views of the Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.

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. LOWER ECTON LANE TRAVELLERS SITE (HE) (9)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Business and Housing Services regarding the Travellers site at Lower Ecton Lane.

RESOLVED: That report be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved as follows:-

(1) That a bid for ODPM grant funding for 75% of the total capital costs be made.

(2) That a bid for Capital funding for up to £125,000 from the 2005/06 Capital Programme (the 25% to support the grant) be approved.

(3) That the Contract Procedure Rules be waived to enable Westgate Technical Services to manage the bid/funding and subsequent refurbishment of the Travellers site for the reasons stated in paragraph 2.4 of the report and the current contract with the Company be extended until the 31 March 2006 to enable the works to be carried out.

(4) That consideration be given during 2005 to leasing the site on a longer term basis to a suitable management company as outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report on a no cost basis to the Council from April 2006.

17. 1 KERRFIELD ESTATE, DUSTON- LAND AT REAR (FS) (9)

This item was withdrawn.

18. LAND AT GREAT RUSSELL STREET (FS) (9)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Strategic Resources seeking approval to the disposal of a site at Great Russell Street as shown on the plan accompanying the report.

RESOLVED: That approval be given in principle to the disposal of the site but in conjunction with the wider area to enable the optimum use and development of the area to take place and that the Ward Councillors be kept updated accordingly.

19. LAND AT STONE CIRCLE ROAD, ROUND SPINNEY (FS) (9)

This item was withdrawn.

20. FREESCHOOL STREET- COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT SITE (FS) (9)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Strategic Resources seeking approval to enter into discussions and negotiations regarding Freeschool Street Comprehensive Redevelopment site as shown on the plan accompanying the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and that approval be given for the Estates and Valuation services to enter into discussions and negotiations with adjoining land owners or their agents for the inclusion of Council land which includes two surface car parks within a redevelopment of the Freeschool Street site on terms and conditions to be agreed. It was also agreed that the Ward Councillors be kept updated accordingly.

21. LEGAL SERVICES- PROPOSED WORKING RELATIONSHIPS/PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE COUNTY (FS) (1, 7, 9)

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor regarding the exploration of closer working relationships / partnerships in the legal context within the County.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be received and noted.
- (2) That approval be given for approaches to be made to the other authorities in the County for closer integrated use of resources and related working arrangements as proposed in the report.
- (3) That approval be given to further explore more detailed partnership arrangements in respect of those areas of reactive Legal work when staff resources permit.

The meeting concluded at 2010 hours.