

Urgent: For the attention of the Chief Executive, the Proper Officer & The Monitoring Officer

I am a member of Northampton Borough Council, and supported by Sally Beardsworth and all of the Liberal Democrat group and by Lee Mason of the Labour Group.

As members of Northampton Borough Council, we request a call in of the Cabinet decision from this months meeting. In particular, the decision to move the report titled "Disposal Programme 2013/14 – sale of buildings and land".

We request this call-in on the basis of a number of demonstrable flaws in the decision making process, in particular:

1. **15.9.4.6 (a)** - There has been no consultation, except with the "ward Councillor", who is leader of the Council. As such, the Consultation is inadequate as described in NBC constitution 15.9.4.6 (a) – for use of it's failure to consult "in accordance with any extant Council consultation toolkit or policy"

The Northampton Borough Council Consultation Toolkit has 8 steps, with 3 further elements to be integrated into consultation. Not a single one of these was considered, consulted or observed.

The consultation with the "ward Councillor" is undermined and further inadequate because of the Councillor's refusal to attend the meeting requested by business owners because he was "too busy".

2. **15.9.4.6 (b)** – It is also clearly the case that there is inadequate information on which to base this decision. While the lack of consultation alone means there is not the proper information regarding the impact on existing land users, local communities who are served by the business etc., there are several other pieces of information which should be taken into account that are clearly missing from the report. Firstly, on top of the lack of consideration for the consequences of forcing existing businesses off the land, lack of detailed definition regarding the intended development mean that the impact of this stage on local communities has also been ignored. Secondly, the assertion that the offer is 'well above market value' is not demonstrated, with assertions that an "independent valuation may be necessary". The independent valuation is definitely necessary, and should have been brought forward alongside this report, to help contextualise the financial efficacy of the sale.
3. **15.9.4.6 (d)** – The sudden sale of this land, which requires the eviction on around a dozen small businesses, has generated substantial controversy within the Workshops themselves and the local community. We appreciate that the cabinet may not have been aware of this fact due to the fact the ward Councillor felt it unnecessary to speak to his residents and pass on their concerns – but whether they are aware of it or not, controversy exists.

4. **15.9.4.6 (e) & (f)** – The report is notably lacking in proper financial information – with figures not present regarding the offer made on the land, the market value of the land, the current income generated by Blackthorn Workshops, etc.
5. **15.9.4.6 (g)** – The decision makers have clearly overlooked important factors in making this decision, including, but not limited to, the feelings and thoughts of local business owners, the needs, desires and opinions of the local community, the value of the land, financial and otherwise, the right of the community to have some consideration paid to these things, as regards the existing situation and a potential development on their doorsteps.