

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH
HELD AT SWANSPool HOUSE, WELLINGBOROUGH
ON TUESDAY 15 APRIL 2014**

Present: The Mayor (Councillor G Lawman) and Councillors Allebone, Bailey, Bass, Beirne, Bell, Blackwell, Carr, Elliott, Emerson, Gough, Graves, Harrington, Hawkes, Henley, Higgins, Hollyman, L Lawman, Maguire, Morrall, Partridge-Underwood, B Patel, M Patel, Pursglove, Raymond, Scarborough, Simmons, Timms, Ward, Warwick, M Waters and Watts.

Officers present: Mr J T Campbell, Chief Executive, Mrs L Elliott, Head of Finance, Mrs B Lawrence, Head of Resources, Miss J Thomas, Interim Head of Planning and Local Development, Miss S Lyons, Solicitor, District Law, Mr G Betts, Mayor's Sergeant and Mrs C A Mundy, Democratic Services Officer.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ainge, Dholakia, Griffiths, and V Waters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L Lawman made a declaration on the Planning Committee minutes of 19 February 2014, WP/2013/0590 (OM) as some of the objectors to the application may have been acquaintances of hers.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on 25 February 2014 be confirmed and signed.

4. QUESTIONS, PETITIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

RESOLVED to note that no questions or petitions had been received from the public. A request to address the meeting had been received from Mr Banks which would be discussed under the Resources Committee minutes of 19 March 2014.

5. PLANNING COMMITTEE – 19 FEBRUARY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee of 19 February 2014 be noted.

6. LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee of 11 March 2014 be noted.

7. PLANNING COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee of 26 March 2014 be noted.

8. STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – 1 APRIL 2014

Reference was made to minute 5 and to the appointment of an independent person to consider standards allegations. Miss Lyons, Head of District Law, confirmed that there was a requirement for an independent person to be appointed and this was progressing. A question was also asked about whether, when a Standards Committee was dealing with a parish council issue, a parish councillor should be on the committee. Miss Lyons confirmed that there was no requirement in the legislation for this.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee of 1 April 2014 be noted.

9. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Community Committee of 17 March 2014 were received.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the food safety enforcement service plan 2014-15 be adopted;
- (ii) the minutes of the Community Committee of 17 March 2014 be adopted.

10. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 18 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Development Committee of 18 March 2014 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Development Committee of 18 March 2014 be adopted.

11. RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 19 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Resources Committee of 19 March 2014 were received.

Mr Banks addressed the meeting on minute 5 – financial monitoring and position statement for 2013-14. He made reference to the income increase from the planning windfall and his concern over the council tax levy affecting the poorest people of the borough which he considered to be an injustice.

Councillor Scarborough addressed the meeting. He confirmed that he had considered that a reasonable decision had been made when agreeing the budget, but that the decision had made the poorest in the borough poorer. He proposed that this item be referred back, for consideration, now that additional information had been received. Councillor Watts reiterated the concerns that

had been expressed and seconded Councillor Scarborough's proposal to refer this item back.

Other councillors commented that this was not feasible as the budget decision had already been implemented. The Mayor noted that referral back would not affect the budget decision but would merely refer back the monitoring report.

Councillor Bell clarified that an item could not be discussed again for a six month period and that a report would, in any case, be put before the June committee giving an update on finances.

The Mayor put Councillor Scarborough's proposal to refer this item back to committee to the meeting. On being put to the vote the proposal was declared lost.

Reference was then made to minute 8 – Review of governance arrangements. Councillor Bell proposed an amendment to (a) (ii) to read as follows:

(ii) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be deleted and the scrutiny function in relation to call-in be removed. This was seconded by Councillor Graves.

Following this Councillor Elliott proposed a further amendment as follows:

“that the Council form a working party focusing on health, wellbeing and poverty across the borough.”

He considered that a working group was required to deal with vital issues and that it should complement the work of the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Board, addressing key issues within the borough's remit, including housing, benefits, promotion of a healthy lifestyle to reduce obesity as well as the impact of poverty on the borough. Councillor Emerson seconded this amendment.

Members responded to this proposal explaining that there was already a Health and Wellbeing Forum. The main function was with Northamptonshire County Council who worked with partners from local authorities, the voluntary sector, police, social landlords and others. It was suggested that there was no need for a working party. Councillor Graves sat on the forum and the minutes were on the council website with the next meeting due to be held on 30 April 2014.

Some members commented that they had experienced great difficulty in finding the agendas and minutes of previous meetings on the website.

Councillor Bell responded to the issues raised. He clarified that Councillor Graves did sit on the board and that the minutes were available on the website. He would, however, ask that a link be put on the front page of the website to assist in finding them if members were experiencing difficulties in doing so. He did not feel that there was a need for a working party. It had

previously been tried and it was concluded that the forum had proved to be the best way to engage with partners.

The Mayor put Councillor Elliott's amendment to the meeting. On being put to the vote this was declared lost.

Reference was then made to Councillor Bell's amendment relating to the Overview and Scrutiny function, Members made particular reference to 4.4.17 of the council's constitution and a view was expressed that it was essential that the scrutiny function be maintained to ensure openness and democracy. Members were reminded that items from committee could continue to be debated at full council meetings and that the scrutiny function remained. Members also commented that the changes to governance could have waited until after the elections in 2015, and asked whether constitutional changes would be required. Other members considered that it was wise to make the changes now and that the council would benefit from the new structure.

Councillor Bell responded to the concerns confirming that members would still be able to raise issues at council meetings, the performance function would not disappear as there would be a Partnerships and Performance Committee. The Community and Development Committees would merge to become the Services Committee and, along with Resources Committee, they would have a membership of 15 councillors each. The Constitution Working Party would be meeting to make any required changes to the constitution.

The Chief Executive also clarified that the Constitution Working Party would meet in the near future and with the advice of the Monitoring Officer, would make any necessary changes to the constitution for Council to consider.

The proposed amendment was put to the meeting. On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried with one vote against.

This amendment then became the substantive motion and on being put to the vote was declared carried.

Councillor Bell also made reference to the proposed calendar of meetings. He confirmed that a further change had been made to the Planning Committee in July, with the approval of the chairman of Planning. He would arrange for this to be circulated to Members in the Friday posting.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Treasury Management Policy Statement be approved;
- (ii) The Prudential and Treasury Indicators be approved;
- (iii) The Annual Investment Strategy be approved;
- (iv) It be noted that the council had previously formally adopted the clauses from the 2011 CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.
- (v) With effect from the 2014 civic year, which commences with annual council on 29 May 2014, that approval be given to:

- (a) The three existing policy committees being deleted and replaced with two policy committees known as Resources Committee and Services Committee;
 - (b) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee being deleted and that the scrutiny function in relation to call in be removed;
 - (c) A Partnerships and Performance Committee be established;
 - (d) The frequency of the two policy committees be six times per civic year;
 - (e) The frequency of the Partnerships and Performance Committee and Audit Committee be three times each per civic year;
 - (f) Reports to any committee meeting of the council should generally require substantive decisions;
 - (g) Items for members to note or for information should generally be communicated via a members' briefing note;
 - (h) The notables report to council be discontinued.
- (vi) The draft civic timetable for 2014 be approved, to incorporate the changes referred to in the minutes and other changes as agreed by the leader and that this be circulated.
 - (vii) The minutes of the Resources Committee of 19 March 2014 be adopted.

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE – 25 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Audit Committee of 25 March 2014 were received.

Councillor Henley referred to the unqualified opinion which had been issued by the External Auditor; this was a fantastic achievement and was very rare and his congratulations were extended to the Head of Finance and her team. Councillor Bell also reiterated this sentiment.

Councillor Bailey, as Chairman, thanked members for their kind words and expressed his congratulations on this achievement, which was seldom seen, and asked that the comments and thanks of Council be passed to Finance employees.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit Committee of 25 March 2014 be adopted.

13. NOTABLE ACTIVITIES

The annexed circulated report of the Chief Executive was received on the notable activities relating to the council's PRIDE objectives. Councillors made reference to the following:

- (i) International Waendel Walk - thanks were extended to the working party that had spent many months preparing for the weekend.
- (ii) Women's World Day of Prayer – The Mayoress extended her thanks to the Mill Road Baptist Church who had presented her with £50 for Help for Heroes.

- (iii) The Young Enterprise Area Finals were commended for giving young people the opportunity to run and set up their own company.
- (iv) The opening of Da Vinci Court was praised as one of the first independent living schemes for adults with disabilities.
- (v) An update was given on the Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan with a draft due to be submitted shortly.
- (vi) Minerva Way Side waste - thanks were expressed to Wellingborough Norse for the work that was being done to stop excess landfill waste.
- (viii) Mayor's Charity Quiz - the Mayor extended congratulations to Councillors Scarborough and Henley for winning the quiz and thanked Councillor Higgins for arranging the quiz and providing the food.
- (ix) Supersonic 70s Show - the Mayor informed the meeting that the show had been excellent and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

RESOLVED that the report and comments made be noted.

14. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN BAILEY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The annexed circulated question from Councillor Bailey was received in relation to planning application WP/2013/0225/(0) which had been refused and subsequently approved by the Planning Inspectorate. Councillor Bailey wished to know if there was any action that the Council could take to challenge the decision and get it reversed.

Councillor Ward as chairman of planning responded to the question and clarified that consideration had been given to appealing the decision but having taken legal advice, and taking into account the lack of a five year housing supply, and the substantial cost that would be incurred, a letter had been sent expressing grave concern over the decision notice. A response to this was awaited.

Councillor Bailey thanked Councillor Ward for his reply and asked if he had any idea how long before the requirement for a five year supply would be abolished. Councillor Ward was unable to give a response.

15. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE DIRECTION OF THE MAYOR OR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

The Mayor reported that he had received a number of compliments regarding the flower beds in Swanspool Gardens and Croyland Gardens looking exceptionally nice this year and he extended congratulations to Wellingborough Norse.

Mayor

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.