

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH  
HELD AT SWANSPool HOUSE, WELLINGBOROUGH  
ON TUESDAY 16 JANUARY 2018**

**Present:** The Mayor, Councillor P Bell and Councillors Abram, Allebone, Anslow, Aslam, Bailey, Bone, Carr, Ekins, Emerson, Francis, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Hallam, Harrington, G Lawman, Lloyd, Morrall, Patel, Scanlon, Scarborough, Skittrall, Walia, Ward, M Waters, V Waters, Watts and York.

**Officers present:** Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Mrs B Gamble, (Director), Miss J Thomas (Monitoring Officer/Director) Miss K Denton, Mrs S Knowles and Mrs V Jessop (Assistant Directors), 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 Beirne, Henley, L Lawman, Maguire, Partridge-Underwood, Simmons and Stevenson.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED** to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, no declarations were made.

**3. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 28 NOVEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the council meeting, held on 28 November 2017, were received.

Councillor Scarborough asked that a members briefing note be provided with an update on any responses received on actions approved at the meeting in November. The managing director confirmed that she would do this.

**RESOLVED** that minutes of the council meeting, held on 28 November 2017, be confirmed and signed.

**4. QUESTIONS/PETITIONS/REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

**RESOLVED** to note that no requests to speak had been received.

**5. MINUTES TO NOTE**

The minutes of the following meetings were received to note:

Licensing Sub-Committee	23 November 2017
Planning Committee	6 December 2017
Planning Committee	20 December 2017

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the above meetings be noted.

## **6. RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 DECEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the resources committee, of 13 December 2017, were received. The Chairman, Councillor Griffiths, asked that it be noted that under item 9, Nene Valley Crematorium that recommendation 4(ii) was to be withdrawn. The reason for this was that the constitution working group would be producing a code of corporate governance which would address the appointment of directors to wholly-owned companies, and it was essential to provide a consistent approach. Work was progressing on the updated constitution and it was expected to be presented to council in April 2018.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) a statutory review of polling districts and polling places commencing on 18 January 2018;
- (ii) the adoption of the terms of reference and the publication for the formal notice of review to enable the consultation to commence on the proposed polling districts and polling places;
- (iii) the representations received during the review being reported back to committee;
- (iv) there being no change to the Borough Council of Wellingborough's local council tax support scheme for 2018-19;
- (v) the key priorities of the business plan 2018-19;
- (vi) the adoption of the corporate plan;
- (vii) the adoption of the proposed corporate performance indicators to replace the current set of indicators;
- (viii) the introduction of a fee of £450 for a direct cremation, which could take place at a time convenient to the crematorium staff and without any use of the chapel or other related services;
- (ix) the list of capital schemes being included in the capital programme;
- (x) capital schemes being re-profiled in line with available resources, based on the funding schedules and scheme priorities;
- (xi) the inclusion in the capital programme of the submitted capital bids for the crematorium, and the release of the crematorium contingency budget into the 2017-18 current capital programme to accommodate those bids;
- (xii) a temporary accommodation fund of £725k to mitigate the budget pressures caused by statutory homelessness duties, and the submission of a detailed project analysis to a future meeting;
- (xiii) the minutes of the resources committee, of 13 December 2017, being adopted, with the exception of recommendation 4(ii).

## **7. WELLINGBOROUGH HOMES BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received in relation to proposed changes to the board membership of Wellingborough Homes.

In October 2015 the Office for National Statistics made changes to the classification of housing associations so that they were no longer identified as public bodies; this had caused particular concern to the government in relation to large scale voluntary transfer housing associations (LSVT). New legislation under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 had imposed changes to the way the council would be represented on the board of Wellingborough Homes. These changes fundamentally limited the influence that a local authority would have on a LSVT housing association.

As part of the stock transfer agreement with Wellingborough Homes it had been agreed that the council shareholder had a right to nominate no more than four board members. The current board members had been nominated at annual council on 23 May 2017 and were Councillors T Aslam, J Ekins, G Lawman and T Lloyd. Under company law the board members had a legal obligation to make decisions and act in the best interest of the company.

The borough council currently held a third of the company's shares with a constitutional arrangement requiring a 75% vote in favour of any decision; this was classed as a "golden share" in favour of the council.

Under the new legislation any local authority membership would be limited to a maximum of 24%. Wellingborough Homes currently had 12 members on its board, so the maximum places the council could have would be two. However, under the new rules there would be no requirement for the company to have any reserved places for councillors. The decision on board membership would be confirmed at the Wellingborough Homes annual general meeting in September 2018.

In the meantime, to ensure legal compliance, there needed to be a reduction from four council representatives to two before 16 May 2018. A meeting had taken place with lead councillors and board members in December 2017 and it was recommended that Councillors Aslam and Ekins remain on the board until the September 2018 AGM. This was an improvement on the statutory minimum, which had been agreed by Wellingborough Homes.

Councillor Griffiths proposed the recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Scarborough. On being put to the vote the recommendation was put to the vote and declared carried (there was one vote against.)

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Councillors G Lawman and T Lloyd be removed as nominated board members of Wellingborough Homes with immediate effect;
- (ii) Councillors T Aslam and J Ekins remain as board members for the remainder of the current municipal year;
- (iii) It be noted that the revised board membership, as agreed by Wellingborough Homes, remain in place from May 2018 until Wellingborough Homes' next annual general meeting in September 2018.

## **8. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to seek approval to contribute up to £25k, from revenue reserves, towards the cost of the joint appointment of consultants (Deloittes), along with other districts and boroughs, to analyse alternative options for unitary governance in Northamptonshire.

Unitary governance for the county had been raised by all of the Members of Parliament in Northamptonshire, who were calling for the current governance structure in Northamptonshire to be abolished and replaced with unitary governance, in the light of the current financial challenges facing all councils and in particular the county council.

The leaders of the borough and district councils had already determined that a unitary authority, based around the current county council, was not an option they wished to pursue, judging it to be too remote from local communities to properly reflect their diverse natures and interests.

In 2016, the other six district and borough councils had commissioned consultants to look into alternative options. Whilst Wellingborough had not been involved in this, the managing director and leader had recently attended some of the meetings and it was considered essential that Wellingborough should now join with district and borough colleagues.

The recent budget announcements by the county council and the level and depth of service cuts proposed had given cause for increased concern. The recently announced finance settlement had done little to help the county council's position and it had become apparent that significant change would be needed to ensure that services for residents of the county were delivered to those that need them and that value for money was provided for all tax payers.

Deloittes had been engaged to investigate the options for unitary governance in Northamptonshire to enable the districts and boroughs to have one voice on the unitary position for the county in relation to any proposals that may be considered by the government.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffiths and seconded by Councillor Scarborough that the council be included as a joint client of Deloitte in the production of a report on the alternative options for unitary governance in Northamptonshire and that the sum of £25,000, from revenue reserves, be set aside to contribute to this analysis and final report.

On being put to the vote this was declared carried.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) approval be given to the inclusion of the Borough Council of Wellingborough, as a joint client of Deloitte, in the production of a report on the alternative options for unitary governance in Northamptonshire, currently commissioned by the other six district and borough councils;
- (ii) approval be given to £25,000 being set aside, from revenue reserves, to contribute towards this analysis and final report.

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

There was no further business.

Mayor

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

