

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH  
HELD AT SWANSPool HOUSE, WELLINGBOROUGH  
ON TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2018**

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

**Officers present:** Mrs L Elliott, (Managing Director), Mrs B Gamble, (Director), Miss J Thomas, (Director/Monitoring Officer), Miss K Denton, Mrs V Jessop, Mrs S Knowles and Mr A Piper (Assistant Directors), Ms H Edwards, (Head of DistrictLaw), Mr G Betts and Miss S Gibson (Mayor's Sergeant and Deputy Sergeant) and Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer).

The Mayor informed the meeting that the report relating to the council tax setting for 2018-19 had been withdrawn from the agenda and would be heard at the extraordinary council meeting to be held on 1 March 2018. He reminded councillors that, at that meeting, the only item to be debated would be the borough council's part of the council tax.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**RESOLVED** to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beirne, Ekins, Partridge-Underwood, Scanlon, Stevenson, M Waters and V Waters.

**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, the following declarations were made.

<b>Name of Councillor</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Interest</b>
G Lawman	Partnerships & Performance Committee 22 1 18 minute 4 - presentation by Teamwork Trust	Personal – as he had allocated county council 'empowering councillors funds' to Teamwork Trust

**3. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 16 JANUARY 2018**

The minutes of the council meeting held on 16 January 2018 were received.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 16 January 2018 be confirmed and signed.

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

**RESOLVED** to note that no questions, petitions or requests to address the meeting had been received.

#### **5. MINUTES TO NOTE**

The minutes of the following meetings were received to note:

Licensing Sub-Committee	22 January 2018
Planning Committee	24 January 2018

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

#### **6. PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2018**

The minutes of the partnerships and performance committee of 22 January 2018 were received.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the partnerships and performance committee of 22 January 2018 be adopted.

#### **7. SERVICES COMMITTEE – 23 JANUARY 2018**

The minutes of the services committee of 23 January 2018 were received.

Councillor Watts referred to minute 4 – tree policy, and asked if a budget had been set aside for the replacement of trees. The chairman responded, commending the excellent work of officers in bringing forward the tree policy and stated that there were many external sources, such as the Woodland Trust that could be approached for funding if there was a need to replace trees. Should council funding be required this would need to be the subject of a request to resources committee.

Reference was made to minute 6 - food safety and health and safety services plans and the adoption thereof which, on being put to the vote, was declared carried.

Councillor Scarborough referred to the public spaces protection order (PSPO) for Wellingborough town centre which had been made to deal with anti-social behaviour. He expressed concern that this order may be aimed at the homeless people in the town centre and asked exactly what evidence had been gathered, and by whom, to warrant the order being made. He asked that this decision be referred back to the committee. Councillor Anslow also asked what anti-social behaviour this referred to, as she believed that discussions had previously been held around anti-social behaviour including littering, drinking in public spaces and dog walkers.

The chairman responded to the queries and confirmed that the PSPO had been made and implemented; it could not therefore be referred back to the

committee, and would be in place for a three year period. The anti-social behaviour did not refer to dog walkers and was not aimed at the homeless. The detail of the prohibitions was contained in the appendix to the report and mostly made reference to the continuing consumption of alcohol following warnings to stop drinking, and persons generally causing a nuisance to others. A consultation had taken place in 2017 and at that time there had been insufficient evidence to make such an order; subsequently evidence had been obtained, by the police, and shared with officers, identifying additional and increasing issues with anti-social behaviour in the town centre, particularly around alcohol. A copy of the order could be disseminated to members.

(Councillor Gough joined the meeting at 7.20pm.)

Councillor Aslam referred to minute 8 – Cemetery Rules and thanked officers for bringing forward the report on the changes to the cemetery rules, particularly in relation to the assistance given to the Muslim community.

Reference was also made to minute 11 – Compulsory Purchase Action and the recommendation therein, which on being put to the vote, was declared carried.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the Food Safety Enforcement Plan 2018-19 be adopted;
- (ii) approval be given to the making of a compulsory purchase order, under section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or section 17 and part XVII of the Housing Act 1985 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, for the acquisition of 47 Albert Road, Wellingborough together with land associated, for prompt resale;
- (iii) the minutes of the services committee of 21 January 2018 be adopted.

## **8. REPORT OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 7 FEBRUARY 2018**

The minutes of the resources committee of 7 February 2018 were received.

Reference was made to minute 6 - Annual Business Plan 2018-19 and the approval thereof, which on being put to the vote was declared, carried.

Minute 7 - Capital Programme Medium Term Financial Plan and the recommendation therein was also put to the vote and declared carried.

Minute 8 referred to the revenue budget 2018-19 and the medium term financial strategy projections.

The Leader, Councillor Griffiths, presented the budget to council as follows:

"The setting of the budget and council tax each year was one of the most challenging and demanding tasks councillors had to undertake; even more so

this year with the heightened media attention on local government finances, especially in Northamptonshire.

“Reserves had again been used to protect services but such reserves would not last forever. It was time to focus on delivering a manageable and sustainable budget for future years based on what our area and our residents needed.

“The council faced growing pressures at a time when funding from central government was falling and with the future uncertain, on both finances and local governance arrangements.

“There remained the need to make local efficiencies and savings and to raise more income, along with ensuring the delivery of services for the people of the borough in the best possible way, with a view to protecting services for the future.

“The council plan and annual business plan for 2018-19 would give the direction to start progressing and developing the projects that would help in doing this. More savings and efficiencies in the coming years would need to be identified along with the delivery of more projects to increase income to bridge the gap in funding predicted for future years. There would be difficult decisions to make, to ensure continued financial stability and to deliver the services the public needed.

“It is therefore proposed to increase the council tax by the maximum allowed, being a £5 increase to the average band D council tax, which would equate to less than 10p a week. This still provided tax payers with excellent value for money and good quality services, supporting them when they need it, whilst at the same time providing a sustainable financial future for the council.

“The focus will continue to be on the residents of the borough to do what is right for them, to protect the vulnerable and to provide services that improve and enhance the lives and wellbeing of all those represented”.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Scarborough, also addressed the meeting.

He made particular reference to the issues relating to finance in local government caused by austerity, an increased demand on social services and in child protection; and particularly the housing and homelessness crisis which had cost the borough £1m this year. He commended the advice received from officers and the way that the borough’s finances had been managed in recent years. He seconded the leader’s proposal.

The mayor put the proposition to the vote and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the following votes were cast:

For: Councillors Abram, Allebone, Anslow, Aslam, Bailey, Bone, Carr, Emerson, Francis, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Hallam, Harrington, Henley, G Lawman, L Lawman, Lloyd, Maguire, Morrall, Patel, Scarborough, Simmons, Skittrall, Walia, Ward, Watts and York (no. 28);

Against: None (no. 0);

Abstention: None (no. 0);

Absent: Councillors Beirne, Ekins, Partridge-Underwood, Scanlon, Stevenson, M Waters and V Waters (no.7)

The motion was declared carried with 28 votes in favour.

Reference was also made to minute 9 - Pay Policy Statement 2018-19, seeking approval for publication, which on being put to the vote was declared carried.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) the Annual Business Plan 2018-19;
- (ii) capital funding being made available for the financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23;
- (iii) the release, into the capital programme for 2018-19 to 2022-23, of the list of prioritised capital schemes;
- (iv) the list of capital schemes awaiting information being noted;
- (v) an increase in the council's average band D council tax in 2018-19 of £5.00 (4.73%), as allowed within the referendum levels announced;
- (vi) the increases shown in the council's average band D council tax in 2019-20 to 2021-22, subject to the referendum criteria:
  - 2019-20: £5.00 (4.52%);
  - 2020-21: £2.30 (1.99%);
  - 2021-22: £2.35 (1.99%);
- (vii) the revenue budget for 2018-19 and the financial plans;
- (viii) the fees and charges schedule, to include the revised cemetery fees (as recommended at services committee on 23 January 2018);
- (ix) the Efficiency Strategy;
- (x) a letter being sent to the government in relation to the receipt of late notification of changes to business rates;
- (xi) the publication of the Pay Policy Statement for 2018-19;
- (xii) the adoption of the minutes of the resources committee of 7 February 2018.

## **9. REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 12 FEBRUARY 2018**

The minutes of the standards committee of 12 February 2018 were received.

Reference was made to the recommendation contained within minute 4 which on being put to the vote was declared carried.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) the planning code of conduct being adopted for incorporation within the constitution;
- (ii) the licensing code of conduct being adopted for incorporation within the constitution;
- (iii) the minutes of the standards committee of 12 February 2018 being adopted.

## **10. SENIOR MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND APPOINTMENT OF THE S151 OFFICER**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director and head of paid service was received in relation to minor changes to the senior management team; and to formally request authority to appoint Mrs S Knowles as the council's chief finance officer (S151 officer) from 1 March 2018.

The report detailed the changes which had taken place over the last year to the structure of the senior management team, including the appointment of four assistant directors. During the year it had become evident that the managing director was facing increasing demands to attend strategic meetings to shape the future of service delivery, and that this demand would increase during the coming year both at a county and regional level.

It was therefore proposed that Mrs S Knowles, already an assistant director, be appointed as the section 151 officer. The managing director would become the deputy section 151 officer to offer help and advice from a professional perspective.

Following the appointment of the assistant directors, Miss Thomas had been able to focus on the growth of the borough and the delivery of housing, along with her monitoring officer role.

Mrs Gamble had been focussing on the delivery of key projects including her role as a director of Wellingborough Bereavement Services Ltd; it was considered that it would be beneficial for Mrs Gamble to be seconded, to support the company for two days a week for a 12 month period, from 1 April 2018. She would then revert to her returning officer role in readiness for the election in May 2019.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the minor changes to the senior management structure be noted;
- (ii) approval be given to the appointment of Mrs S Knowles as the council's chief finance officer (S151) with effect from 1 March 2018.

**11. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

The annexed circulated report of the managing director was received to inform members of the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and to adopt a new scheme of members' allowances.

Appended to the report was a summary of the recommendation of the IRP along with a financial analysis of current and recommended allowances.

A lengthy debate ensued with a number of members expressing their views.

Some considered that it would be wrong to accept an increase in allowances as the general public had been, and would continue to be, affected by austerity measures that had been introduced as a result of cuts to local government finances generally. There would be more cuts to vital local services in the coming year, the numbers presenting as homeless had greatly increased, and working families were frequently using foodbanks as they could no longer meet all their outgoings. There was also concern that council officers had, in real terms, had their pay cut and had not received pay rises. It was considered that councillors did not take on the role for the money but to help the community. There was also concern over the timing of this report and how this would be perceived by the public.

Other councillors considered that there had not been an increase in the members' allowance for over nine years and during that time the workload and responsibility of being a councillor had drastically increased. Whilst happy to give their time voluntarily, some were funding their councillor workload from their own finances. The issue of recruiting a diverse array of councillors from all walks of life and backgrounds also had to be considered; it was felt that nobody should be prohibited from standing for election, and it was hoped that the new scheme would attract different sectors of the community to apply. It was considered that the increase to the allowance was modest considering the timespan and members were reminded that accepting the allowance, and/or increase, was optional and members did not have to take it if they did not wish to do so.

Councillor Scarborough proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Emerson.

- “(i) that recommendations 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 be approved with effect from 1 September 2017;
- (ii) that the Independent Remuneration Panel be appointed to carry out a further review in three years.”

Under rule 4.1.6 (d) of the constitution nine councillors made a request for a recorded vote on this item.

The following votes were cast:

For: Councillors Abram, Anslow, Aslam, Emerson, Francis, Henley, Maguire, Scarborough and Watts (no.9);

Against: Councillors Allebone, Bailey, Bone, Carr, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Hallam, Harrington, G Lawman, L Lawman, Morrall, Simmons, Skittrall, Walia, Ward and York (no.17);

Abstention: Councillors Lloyd and Patel (no.2);

Absent: Councillors Beirne, Ekins, Partridge-Underwood, Scanlon, Stevenson, M Waters and V Waters (no.7).

The amendment was declared lost with 9 votes in favour, 17 votes against and 2 abstentions.

The mayor put the following proposal to the meeting:

“ It be resolved that:

- (i) approval be given to recommendations 1 to 18 of the Independent Remuneration Panel with effect from 1 September 2017;
- (ii) any allowances already paid to vice-chairmen up to 31 March 2018 not be recovered;
- (iii) approval be given to an increase, from 1 April 2018, and thereafter annually on each 1 April, equal to the agreed National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for employees be made to members;
- (iv) approval be given to the Independent Remuneration Panel carrying out a further review in three years.”

Under rule 4.1.6 (d) of the constitution nine councillors made a request for a recorded vote on this item.

The following votes were cast:

For: Councillors Allebone, Bailey, Bone, Carr, Gough, Graves, Griffiths, Hallam, Harrington, G Lawman, L Lawman, Morrall, Simmons, Skittrall, Walia, Ward and York (no.17);

Against: Councillors Abram, Anslow, Aslam, Emerson, Francis, Henley Maguire, Scarborough and Watts (no.9);

Abstention: Councillors Lloyd and Patel (no.2);

Absent: Councillors Beirne, Ekins, Partridge-Underwood, Scanlon, Stevenson, M Waters and V Waters (no.7).

The motion was declared carried with 17 votes in favour, nine against and two abstentions.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) recommendations 1 to 18 of the Independent Remuneration Panel's report, with effect from 1 September 2017;
- (ii) any allowances already paid to vice-chairmen between 1 September and 31 March 2018 not being recovered;
- (iii) an increase being paid to members from 1 April 2018, and thereafter annually on each 1 April, equal to the agreed National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for employees;
- (iv) the Independent Remuneration Panel carrying out a further review in three years.

## **12. STANDARDS – APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON**

The annexed circulated report of the monitoring officer was received to seek approval to the appointment of two independent persons for standards in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

The report detailed the appointment of Mr D Smith in July 2015. He had been supporting the council on standards matters since his appointment. It was now considered to be prudent to appoint a second independent person in addition. The monitoring officer and assistant director had interviewed Mr I Khan and he was able to demonstrate his abilities against the essential criteria to undertake the role.

It is therefore recommended that Mr Khan be appointed for a period of three years; it was also considered appropriate to extend Mr Smith's appointment for a further three years at the same time.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) the extension of the appointment of Mr Dean Smith as the council's independent person for standards for a three year period from 28 February 2018;
- (ii) the appointment of Mr Inamullah (Inam) Khan as the council's additional independent person for standards for a period of three years from 28 February 2018.

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

There was no further business and the mayor declared the meeting closed.

Mayor

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.