

MINUTES OF ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 28 June 2011 at 7.00 pm in the Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds.

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor C J E Spicer) (in the Chair),
Councillors Ager, Beckwith, Mrs Broughton, Buckle, Clements, Clifton-Brown, Cockle, Cox, Everitt, Farmer, Farthing, French, Mrs Gower, Griffiths, Mrs Hind, P Hopfensperger, Mrs R V Hopfensperger, Hordern, Houlder, Marks, McManus, Mrs Mildmay-White, Nettleton, Oliver, Pugh, Ray, Redhead, Mrs Richardson, Mrs Rushbrook, Mrs Rushen, Simner, Springett, Mrs Stamp, Stevens, Thorndyke, F J Warby and Mrs D A Whittaker.

22. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Katherine Valentine, of Saint Marys Church, Pakenham, opened the meeting with prayers.

23. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5 April 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

Minute 3, Election of Mayor, of the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 May 2011 was amended to record that the Election of Mayor was seconded by Councillor Hale and not Councillor Ray. Subject to the aforementioned amendment the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. Mayor's Communications

The Mayor reported on the civic engagements and charity activities which he, the Mayoress, Deputy Mayor and Mayoress had attended since his election on 19 May 2011. In particular, he informed the Council on three of the events he attended: the Royal Anglians Oath of Allegiance Ceremony for new recruits, Normandy Veterans Commemoration Service and 16 Air Assault Brigade Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving.

Councillor Buckle, the Deputy Mayor, informed the Council of the successful Annual Awards Ceremony held by West Suffolk College at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

25. Announcements from the Leader of the Council

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, referred to the recent tragedy at Nowton Park and stated that the Council's thoughts were with the families of Mrs Bullett and those injured. He thanked the Council's staff for the professional way they had dealt with the incident.

He also reported that Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) had announced that it would be carrying out a review of progress on shared services provision. He advised that the Borough Council would also be embarking on a review which, whilst seeking to do as much as possible with FHDC, its preferred partner, would look at how shared services might be broadened to include other partners if necessary.

26. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms Byrne, Chung, Hale, Mrs Levack, Rout, Mrs P A Warby and A Whittaker.

27. **Declarations of Interest**

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

28. **Public Question Time**

Ms Gedge of Bury St Edmunds asked whether Borough Councillors shared concerns that pupils in Bury St Edmunds would be 'short changed' by the implementation of the County Council's two tier system without the financial backing given to 'non-Bury St Edmunds' schools in stages 1 and 2 of this process.

Ms Miller of Barrow, in support of the previous question, stated that a communication from County Councillor Newman, Portfolio Holder, Children, Schools and Young People's Services, had not explained in full the situation in Bury St Edmunds as it appeared that two versions of the 2 tier system were to be introduced, with either reception at Year 4 or Year 6.

In reply, **Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council**, replied that whilst the Borough Council was not the primary responsible body for schools, Councillors were aware of, and some shared, the concerns being expressed. It was understood that the County Council was re-visiting the issue. Some Borough Councillors were also County Councillors and would have heard the concerns being expressed. Individual Ward Members were also making representations. He gave an assurance that the Borough Council would ensure that the County Council were made aware of the concerns expressed.

29. **Items Referred to Full Council by Cabinet and Democratic Renewal Working Party**

The Council considered the Schedule of Referrals contained within Report C33 and an Addendum to Report C33 (both previously circulated).

(A)(1) Safeguarding Children Policy

On the motion of Councillor Everitt, seconded by Councillor Ray, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That the updated Safeguarding Children Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to Report B587, be approved.

(A)(2) Review of the Grant Terms and Conditions for the Recreation, Village Halls and Play Area Grant Scheme (RVHPAGS) and the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund (RACIF): Single Rural Grant Scheme

On the motion of Councillor Everitt, seconded by Councillor Farthing, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the Council's Grants Policy be amended as set out in Appendix A to Report B583; and
- (2) the Corporate Director for Community, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for grants, be authorised to make minor typographic, grammatical and/or factual changes to the Council's Grants Policy before it is re-published, and to keep it updated in relation to any future changes made by Cabinet in relation to its own delegated decision-making powers to officers in consultation with the Grant Working Party.

(B) Referrals from Cabinet: 25 May 2011

There were no recommendations to Council emanating from this meeting of the Cabinet.

(C)(1) Member Development: Update

On the motion of Councillor Thorndyke, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gower, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That, the Member Development Policy, attached as Appendix A to Report C33, be approved.

(C)(2) Payment of Members' Travel Expenses

Councillor Cox considered that the current system worked well and did not need to be changed. He wished to be informed on the amount to be saved by introducing the new claim processing system. However, there was a consensus of opinion that Members should be responsible for submitting their own travel claims and, therefore, the current system did need to be changed.

On the motion of Councillor Thorndyke, seconded by Councillor Marks, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the proposed process for the payment of Members' expense claims outlined in Report C13 be approved; and
- (2) new paragraph 12.2 detailed in paragraph 5.2 of Report C13, replace paragraphs 12.2 and 12.3 in Part 6, Members' Allowances Scheme, in the Council's Constitution.

(Councillor Cox wished it be recorded that he voted against the resolutions.)

30. **Ninth Annual Scrutiny Report 2010/2011**

The Council received and noted the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny, Performance and Audit Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees, previously circulated as Report C34.

Article 7 of the Council's Constitution required that *'The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and Policy Development Committee must report annually to the full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate'*

Councillor Oliver, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the reporting period, paid tribute to former Councillor Lockwood, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the reporting period, not only for his work as a Councillor in general but also his Chairmanship of the Committee. It was agreed that a letter be sent to Councillor Lockwood.

Councillor Spicer, Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Council.

31. **Appointment of a Trustee to Southgate Community Partnership**

The Council considered a narrative item which sought a Borough Councillor representative on the Southgate Community Partnership Trustees.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Farthing, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Mrs Stamp be appointed as a Trustee to the Southgate Community Partnership

32. **Council's Constitution: Revenues and Benefits Service**

The Council considered Report C35 (previously circulated) which sought approval for amendments to the Council's Constitution in respect of activities associated with the provision of the Revenues and Benefits Service by Anglia Revenues Partnership.

On 28 September 2010 Council approved that the Revenues and Benefits Section join the Anglia Revenues Partnership as a full partner from 1 April 2011 (minute 53 referred). This decision had necessitated an update to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as contained within Part 3, Responsibility for Functions, of the Council's Constitution.

A discussion was held regarding the procedures and timescales associated with writing off debts. It was also recognised that the transfer of the Borough Council's Revenues and Benefits Services to the Anglia Revenues Partnership had, as far as the claimants were concerned, been without incident which was a credit to the Chief Finance Officer and her team.

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Cockle, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That, the amendments to the Council's Constitution, as detailed in Appendix B to Report C35, be approved.

33. **Quarterly Report on Special Urgency**

The Council received and noted a narrative item, as required by the Council's Constitution, in which the Leader of the Council reported that at the time the Council agenda was published, no executive decisions had been taken under the special urgency provisions of the Constitution.

34. **Reports and Questions**

(a) Report from the Leader of the Council: Councillor Griffiths (Report C36)

Councillor Griffiths informed the Council that although the bid for Suffolk Business Park (SBP) for Local Enterprise Zone status to the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) was unsuccessful, it did score highly. If the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP and/or the New Anglia LEP achieved Enterprise Zone status then the bid for Suffolk Business Park could be resubmitted to the next round of regional funding. He also informed the Council that the Borough Council had agreed to support a bid for Alconbury being an Enterprise Zone within the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP.

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Griffiths, who duly responded:-

- (1) discussions at the Rural Area Working Party concerning identifying practical solutions following the recent reduction in bus services and the proposals of Suffolk County Council to install intelligent lighting systems;
- (2) the need to encourage small villages to enter the Borough Council's Village of the Year competition;
- (3) the potential problems that could be encountered with the introduction of Suffolk County Council's intelligent lighting system where in a particular locality only part of the lighting was provided by the County Council;
- (4) to ensure that if funding was made available to enhance Broadband that it was directed to those areas that had very poor Broadband coverage and not initially directed at those areas which had relatively good Broadband provision; and
- (5) the parking arrangements at West Suffolk College.

Councillor Griffiths agreed to provide a written response to question (5).

(b) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Bury St Edmunds and Community Safety Portfolio: Councillor Everitt (Report C37)

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Everitt, who duly responded:-

- (1) the successful operation of the Bury Skate Park and the identification of a possible site located in the eastern area of Bury St Edmunds; and
- (2) the successful community picnic at the Howard Primary School, in Bury St Edmunds.

(c) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Culture and Sport Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White (Report C38)

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White reported that the Rwandan Convention scheduled for 22 to 24 July 2011 had been cancelled but that other events were still taking place and she would ensure that Members would be notified of these events. It was understood that the Convention would be rescheduled.

The following topic was the subject of a question put to Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, who duly responded:-

- (1) how much poison ivy was growing in East Town Park in Haverhill and how this problem was being addressed.

In response to a question, Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, informed the Council that he had written to the brother of the late Sir John Agnew acknowledging Sir John's contribution to the community and to the successful operation of the Rougham Airfield in particular.

(d) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Asset Management Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White (Report C39)

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, who duly responded:-

- (1) details of the sale of Hamlet Croft in Haverhill as a residential site, what profit was involved for the Council and who had approved Bloor Homes as the developer of the site;
- (2) whether the refurbishment of the Haverhill Area Offices would still include a Members' Room and the problems with gaining access to the offices; and
- (3) the reasons for the cancellation of an Apache helicopter landing in the Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds as part of Armed Forces Day.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White agreed to provide a written response to (1) and (2) above.

(e) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Street Scene Portfolio: Councillor Stevens (Report C40)

Councillor Stevens provided an update on the repercussions of the fires at Lackford and Haverhill Transfer Stations but was pleased to announce that the Borough Council had maintained services to its customers with the co-operation of Forest Heath District Council. He then provided an overview on the Government announcement concerning its review of waste policy in England. He considered that the Borough Council had no desire or need to return to weekly bin collections and that the recycling rate of over 50% was one of the highest in the country.

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Stevens, who duly responded:-

- (1) the current policy/procedures for the disposal of part used tins of paint;
- (2) the policy/procedures for the disposal of bulky goods by householders; and
- (3) the potential impact of the closure of Ingham Recycling Centre on fly-tipping.

Councillor Stevens agreed to provide a written response to questions (1) and (2) above.

(f) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Haverhill and Housing Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Gower (Report C41)

Councillor Mrs Gower provided statistics in respect of the 'Supporting Young Haverhill' project, which was being led by Jobcentre Plus and brought together many different organisations to help young people bridge the gap between education and employment and find their way into jobs or training. She informed the Council that the 'Housing ... What Housing' event had been postponed to 5 October 2011 in order that further information would be available.

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Mrs Gower, who duly responded:-

- (1) the success of the Chalkstone Community Picnic and the identification of appropriate pictures for possible inclusion in Community Spirit; and
- (2) the identification of the owners of a parcel of land located within the Merry-Go-Round site in Bury St Edmunds.

Councillor Mrs Gower agreed to provide a written response to questions (1) and (2) above.

(g) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Performance and Organisational Development Portfolio: Councillor Ray (Report C42)

Councillor Ray stressed the need for all Members to complete the Training Needs Analysis form which would be sent out shortly. Not only was the completion of this form necessary to help produce the Member Development Programme but also to help the Borough Council re-achieve

the East of England Local Government Association Charter for Elected Member Development. He then informed the Council that Forest Heath District Council would not now be considering the business cases for ICT, Property Services, Learning and Development and the shared Payroll/Human Resources System as the District Council had decided to undertake a review of its Shared Services Agenda and a report would be going to its full Council at the end of July 2011.

The following topic was the subject of a question put to Councillor Ray who duly responded:-

- (1) the distribution of the consultation postcards associated with Vision 2031 and the number of cards returned that had been issued by Councillor Cox.

Councillor Ray agreed to provide a written response to (1) above.

- (h) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Resources and Efficiency Portfolio: Councillor Ray (Report C43)

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Ray who duly responded:-

- (1) whether the contract recently issued in respect of providing window cleaning services was awarded to a company within St Edmundsbury or outside of the area; and
- (2) whether the contract for the window cleaning services at bus stations, and in particular Bury St Edmunds bus station, included the cleaning of the glass surfaces of the bus shelters.

Councillor Ray agreed to provide a written response in respect of questions (1) and (2) above.

- (i) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Transport and Planning Portfolio: Councillor Clements (Report C44)

Councillor Clements reported that the low emissions car park at School Yard East in Bury St Edmunds was proving very successful. During the month of May there were 380 uses and this was before the official launch of this car park. He then informed the Council about a forthcoming traffic survey. Cameras were appearing in various locations in Bury St Edmunds and were part of a two week study to build a strategic traffic flow model of the town to test the potential impact of future housing development. The study had been commissioned by a group of developers promoting the strategic development sites around the town identified in the Council's adopted Core Strategy. It had been designed by the consultants in consultation with Suffolk County Council, the Highways Agency and officers from the Borough Council. The survey began on 18 June 2011 and would examine traffic flows, vehicle movements and pedestrian crossing points. He emphasised that there was no personal data being collected or held.

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Clements who duly responded:-

- (1) bus services within Bury St Edmunds and a forthcoming meeting between Councillors, residents and bus operators at the County Upper School on 6 July 2011;
 - (2) the hoardings still in place in the car parks in the School Roads East and West in Bury St Edmunds; and
 - (3) the apparent contradiction between the Borough Council wishing to reduce the traffic congestion within Bury St Edmunds and the provision of a low emission car park.
- (j) Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Former Councillor Lockwood (Report C45)

No questions were asked.

- (k) Report from the Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Hale (Report C46)

No questions were asked.

- (l) Questions to the Chairmen of other Committees

No questions were asked.

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, informed the Council of recent discussions between himself as Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White as Deputy Leader and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillors Nettleton and Houlder. He stated that concern had been expressed that there was a public perception at the apparent lack of co-ordination between the Borough Council's Licensing and Planning Sections in dealing with applications that required consideration by both. He had asked that a review be undertaken.

35. Exempt Information: Exclusion of the Public

On the motion of Councillor Clements, seconded by Councillor French, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

36. Housing Benefit Cases Settlement: Use of Chief Executive's Urgency Powers

The Council received and noted an exempt report which detailed the reasons for the use of the Chief Executive exercising his urgency powers as contained within Part 3(C) of the Council's Constitution to authorise settlement of a housing benefit matter.

37. **Conclusion of Business**

The meeting concluded at 8.57 pm.

MAYOR