



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 13th SEPTEMBER 2011

PRESENT: Councillor J Oates (Chair), Councillors T Clements, B Beale, S Claymore, D Cook, R Cook, C Cooke, S Doyle, J Faulkner, D Foster, K Gant, M Gant, J Garner, M Greatorex, A James, A Lees, A Lunn, R McDermid, K Norchi, M Oates, N Oates, S Peale, R Pritchard, E Rowe, P Seekings and M Thurgood

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), John Wheatley (Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director (Resources)), Stefan Garner (Deputy Director (Finance Exchequer and Revenues)), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer) and Lara Allman (Democratic & Election Services Officer)

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L Bates, S Munn, G Pinner and S Pritchard.

32 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July were approved and signed as a correct record.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

34 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Brian Beale back to the Chamber.

Announcement by Councillor B Beale

Councillor Brian Beale thanked everyone for their good wishes and support through his illness. He is still undergoing Chemotherapy so until his strength returns he is glad that Councillor Greatorex has offered to step into the breach.

He added that he will continue to serve as an elected member to the best of his ability.

Announcement by the Mayor

The funeral of John Betteridge, Mayor in 1964, took place today (13 September). The Mayor was pleased to see ten former Mayors and two Deputy Mayors at the funeral. A minutes silence was then observed.

Announcement by the Leader of the Council

The Leader appointed Councillor M Greatorex as a temporary replacement to the Community Safety Portfolio Holder for 2 months whilst Councillor B Beale undertakes chemo treatment.

Announcement by Councillor M Greatorex

He welcomed Councillor B Beale back and assured him that he would do his utmost to carry out the duties to the best of his abilities.

Announcement by Councillor J Garner

The Heart of England Britain in Bloom competition has now taken place. Tamworth Borough Council has been awarded a gold award and Bright Crescent has been awarded an outstanding achievement award in its own right.

Announcement by Councillor J Garner

The Joint Waste Management team have been awarded the Local Authority National Recycling Award of the Year. A plaque was presented to the Mayor.

Announcement by Councillor R Pritchard

The BMX Lottery Stage 2 funding application for £47,300 has been accepted and has full planning permission.

Announcement by the Mayor

A reminder that the Battle of Britain Parade would take place on Sunday 19 September and everyone is welcome to attend.

35 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO 1.
Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor C Cooke will ask the Portfolio Holder for Quality of Life, the following question:-

"This is a request for a breakdown of the latest figures for empty residential dwellings within Tamworth Borough.
The breakdown requested is

- a. Dwellings empty for less than 6 months
- b. Dwellings empty for 6 months to two years
- c. Dwellings empty over two years?"

The Portfolio Holder for Quality of Life gave the following reply:

There are currently 392 dwellings that have been empty for less than 6 months, 217 have been empty for 6 months to two years and 60 have been empty for over two years. There are 12 Council properties currently on notice, 15 advertised and pre-allocated and 3 all viewed and signed up. We have set a target to bring 10 empty houses back into use per year.

Supplementary Question

"Do you believe that it is sufficient for only 10 houses a year to be brought back into use?"

Councillor M Oates gave the following reply:-

"The target of 10 has been exceeded, already 11 this year. Some we know the reasons why they are empty, some are subject to probate and some where residents are in hospital. Even if we brought all empty houses back into use we still wouldn't have enough housing."

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO 2.
Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor C Cooke will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Enterprise, the following question:-

"In 2005 a report produced by outside consultants recommended new standards for Open Space in the Tamworth. This has apparently been put on a back-burner. It was never consulted on therefore could never be adopted as policy. Bearing in mind this was 6 years ago now, will the portfolio holder advise me if and when I can expect these proposed new standards are to be consulted upon with a view to adopting the new standards as Council policy?"

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Enterprise gave the following reply:

The Council has two adopted open space policies in its saved Local Plan (originally adopted in 2006, selected policies saved in 2009): ENV13: Protection of Open Space and ENV14: Open space for new developments. The latter policy sets a standard for the provision of new open space in new developments. This is a national standard and has been used since the Plan's adoption.

The Council commissioned consultants to undertake a study to identify the local demand for open space, advise on standards based on assessments of local

needs and identify specific needs, surpluses or deficiencies both now and in the future to inform the development of future planning policies.

This Open Space Study has informed the development of policies in the draft Core Strategy, the production of which has been delayed over a number of years due to delays in the production and adoption of the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Revision. The current Government has confirmed that Regional Spatial Strategies will be abolished which will allow local authorities to move forward with the production of new local plans.

The open space study is a piece of evidence to support the development of planning policies and has been available for those wishing to do so to comment on since it was published. The study has been used to inform policies in the core strategy, the most recent draft was consulted on in October 2009. The Open Space Study is currently being updated and the revised findings will inform the policies in the Core Strategy on standards taking into account changes in national guidance.

The Council intends to publish its Core Strategy for consultation in early 2012 and adopt it following an Examination in Public later in the year. This will contain its policy on the expected standard for the provision of new open space in new developments. Further detail may be provided by a supplementary planning document.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO 3.
Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor Andrew James will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Enterprise, the following question:-

" Does the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Enterprise agree that the news that Tamworth Castle has won an award for educational work, is fantastic for both the Castle and the town and would he like to comment further?"

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Enterprise gave the following reply:

- This is the second time the Castle has been presented with the Sandford award for excellence in heritage education. The inspector in his report described the workshop he visited as one of the best he has ever seen. He was also impressed by the hands on and interactive approach to the session giving it a wow factor for students.
- The education and events team at the Castle is led by Kirsty Sherwood supported by Rachel Wanklyn with 15 volunteers who help to deliver the sessions, in my view they should feel very proud of their achievement. As should all the castle staff given recent success in the HLF bid and on going Hoard Exhibition.
- The education team provide exciting lessons and workshops on Saxon, Medieval, Tudor, Stuart and Victorian history and across all key stages.

This comprehensive range of sessions in a fantastic setting delivered by an enthusiastic and skilled team is a real asset to the town.

Councillor Steven Claymore went on to propose a motion of thanks to all staff and volunteers who work at the Castle

(Moved by Councillor S Claymore and seconded by Councillor J Faulkner)

36 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2010/11

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services seeking Members approval of the Annual Report on the Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2010/11 was considered.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The actual 2010/11 Prudential Indicators within the report were approved, and;
- 2 The Treasury Management stewardship report for 2010/11 was accepted.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

37 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 OFFICE OF SURVEILLANCE COMMISSIONERS INSPECTION

The Report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer informing Members of the outcome of the visit from the Office of Surveillance Commissioner on 18 July 2011, and advising Members of proposed changes to the RIPA Policy arising therefrom was considered.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The outcome arising from the visit by the Office of Surveillance Commissioner was endorsed, and;
- 2 The Changes to the RIPA Policy were approved.

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor M Greatorex)

A third recommendation was added.

RESOLVED: That:

- 3 The Solicitor to the Council and Officers involved be thanked for their work in bringing about the improvements

(Moved by Councillor J Faulkner and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

The Mayor