



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 27th MARCH 2012

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

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), John Wheatley (Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director (Resources)), Anica Goodwin (Assistant Chief Executive), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer) and Mary Gallagher (Legal and Democratic Services Manager)

72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Bates, D Foster and P Seekings.

73 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2012 AND 7 MARCH 2012

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 February 2012 and 7 March 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

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

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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

Announcement by Councillor R Cook

Councillor R Cook announced that this was his last meeting as a member of Council. He considered standing again but said that he is not as young as he

used to be. He has contested every election since 1965 and lost a few but won many more. He has had a fantastic time and had support from lots of people.

He has seen lots of changes including two Committee structure changes and the present Cabinet structure. His first appointment was to the Sewage and Sewage Causes Committee. He recalled a time when he dangled fish in water to see how long it survived.

He will sit as a member of public when he leaves and attend Freeman events too as he is very proud to be a Freeman of the Borough. He has received support from past and present members of staff and the public and he is very grateful for all the support he has been given. He has memories that he will carry to his grave.

He wished good fortune to everyone at this Council.

Announcement by the Mayor

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ron Cook for his contribution to Council and as Mayor over the years.

Announcement by Councillor J Faulkner

Hopes that Councillor Ron Cook enjoys his retirement and thanked him for his contribution over the years.

Announcement by Councillor D Cook

Councillor D Cook thanked Councillor Ron Cook and said it had been an honour to work with him. He has known him since he had been President of the Conservative Party in Tamworth.

Announcement by Councillor R McDermid

Councillor McDermid said that he came to public office to work for the Community which is the Heart of Tamworth and he does his best to inspire the people out there. He had a weird experience on holiday, while walking down the street he met Councillor Ron Cook. Councillor Cook's expertise and enthusiasm are second to none and he wished him and his wife well in his retirement.

Announcement by Councillor K Gant

Councillor Gant announced that he had known Councillor Ron Cook since 1952 and they were in the forces together. He described Councillor Cook as a very affable, well meaning person on Spital Ward and everyone has a high regard for him. He has done his best for everyone. Both Councillor Ken Gant and Councillor Maureen Gant gave their best regards for a long and happy retirement.

Announcement by Councillor J Garner

Councillor Garner paid tribute to Councillor Ron Cook. In 1979 they were on opposite sides of the Chamber. The pattern bears no resemblance to today and there is a far better management style. He wished him well for his retirement.

Announcement by Councillor A James

Councillor James said that Councillor Ron Cook had paid great service to the town and although he is retiring from the Council, he will still be out there pounding the streets. He wished him luck and thanked him very much.

Announcement by Councillor G Pinner

Councillor Pinner and Councillor Ron Cook go back a very long way. They met before an election meeting and went to the Bulls Head, it was all downhill from there. He then thanked Councillor Cook and wished him all the best.

Announcement by Councillor S People

Councillor People first met Councillor Ron Cook in 1990 and a year later they were on the Leisure Committee. One night they were sorting out the charges for the Castle and they couldn't decide how to vote so after the meeting they went to the pub to sort it out ready for the next meeting. As a young Councillor he debated and argued but always had a personal approach with good humour. Councillor Cook spoke to his sister and said thank goodness there is one other Tory here at the ball (this was some years ago). He was delighted to see Councillor Cook made a Freeman of the Borough and looked forward to seeing him at future events.

Announcement by Councillor M Greatorex

Councillor Greatorex has only known Councillor Ron Cook for two years but as a new member he had taken the opportunity to observe him in meetings and in group meetings. He has taken the lead from him by watching to see if he nods or shakes his head. He thanked Councillor Cook for the courtesy he has shown Councillor Greatorex and other new members and wished him well for the future.

Announcement by Councillor R Pritchard

Councillor R Pritchard added his own words of thanks to Councillor Ron Cook and said he had done them proud.

BMX Track Announcement

Councillor R Pritchard advised that construction of the grant funded Community Play BMX track should begin in about two weeks. A lot of work has gone into this and he would like to take this opportunity to extend his thanks to The Belgrave Residents Association, Tamworth BMX Club, Staffordshire County Council, the Highways Agency and many local residents for making this happen. Finally he gave special thanks to Andrew Barratt, who is a credit to this Council and has been a great help getting this project to its end.

76 QUESTION TIME:*QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC* **NO. 1**

Under Procedure Rule No 10, Mr K Forest, 64a Foxglove, Amington, Tamworth will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Enterprise, the following question:-

“It is my understanding that linked to the Council’s exciting Town centre regeneration proposals there is also a Town Centre master plan.

Could some early arrangements be made to display and explain the ideas to the public.”

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

Yes a town centre masterplan was produced in 2009 following consultation in late 2008 and early 2009 with key stakeholders in the town centre. The masterplan has been promoted at several public events and has been available for the public since its publication in 2009 in both hard copy and on CD.

The Council is working with public and private sector partners to implement some of the ideas in the masterplan, such as improving the pedestrian and public transport links to the town centre. The Town Centre remains a key corporate priority and the new Core Strategy places the regeneration of the town centre as a key objective. We also intend to produce a town centre Supplementary planning document that will provide more detail and guide the future regeneration of the town centre. We will ask the general public for their thoughts in late spring which will guide the development of that document.

Supplementary Question

I didn’t know that this was in the public domain and I will seek a copy. It was originally produced in 2009, is there any updated information and how up to date is the information? Is it accessible to the public?

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

It has not been updated. The updates are as per the Core Strategy. If you want a copy of the Town Centre Masterplan I will get you one.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC **NO. 2**

Under Procedure Rule No 10, Mr K Forest, 64a Foxglove, Amington, Tamworth will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Enterprise, the following question:-

“Concerns were registered at a recent planning meeting attended by a highways officer that the detail and accuracy of Traffic Impact data and car parking assessment and provision is based on data that does not come from the Tamworth area. For various reasons Tamworth has a high car user rate. It therefore would need higher car parking needs. The highways officer stated “there is no data for Tamworth”. This may be a reason why Highways do not raise planning objections on highways matters within Tamworth when perhaps they ought to. Several years ago applications required developers to use Traffic Impact studies for existing Town areas to compile local standards.

Could Tamworth Council liaise with Staffordshire Highways to ensure a return to such local standards and that all traffic related data supplied by applicants as part of their planning submissions be obtained from Tamworth based comparisons in order to help avoid such traffic appraisal problems occurring?.”

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

Yes we will liaise with the county council.

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:-

"At the June Council last year I asked two questions, one on Tamworth's Housing Allocations policy and one on the Incentive To Move scheme. The answer given at the time said that there was to be a review of these things in December last year. I am not aware of any review taking place nor of any changes in the policies. I also hear rumours that the Council is looking in the future to move tenants from under-occupied homes even though they may have lived in these homes for many years. Will the portfolio holder assure such council tenants that they have nothing to fear and she personally has no plans and will oppose any change in policy that forces long-term tenants from their homes into smaller homes?"

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

The Allocation Policy was indeed due for Review in December 2011, however it was decided to re-profile the timing to enable full account to be taken of the Localism Act 2011 and a subsequent consultation regarding allocations regulation which has now followed the Act. There are a number of changes which will impact on the councils allocations policy and until we have completed the assessment of the impact of these legislative and regulatory changes it will not be possible for our own policies to be reviewed. The decision to delay our review is driven by a number of considerations not least of which is value for money as any material change, in the allocations policy, requires every applicant to be consulted in writing for a three month period. Every time we do consultation we need to find £5000.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012, will introduce changes to the benefit system which will lead to a reduction in housing benefit for working age households who are under occupying. The principles, behind this is to encourage best use of council accommodation. The council will work with affected tenants to review their options and are notifying tenants of upcoming changes so they can make informed choices. Given the reduction in benefits some tenants' may wish to consider alternative and smaller accommodation. A number of options are being explored to increase the supply of suitable, affordable accommodation including increasing access to private rented accommodation for example, through the proposed social lettings agency.

A number of member seminars are planned to discuss the impact of these changes in more detail, one in May on the impact of welfare reform and one in June on the used of fixed term tenancies and opportunities for managing tenure going forward. I would encourage colleagues to attend. This will help inform housing views going forward to enable policies to be made going forward.

Supplementary Question

What is the timetable going forward?

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

There are seminars in May and June and we should then have enough information to decide the way forward and carry out the review.

77 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT

The Report of the Chair of Audit and Governance Committee advising Members on the action taken by the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2011/2012 was considered.

RESOLVED: That the findings of the content of the report be endorsed.

(Moved by Councillor M Gant and seconded by Councillor R Cook)

78 SCRUTINY CHAIRS' REPORTS

The Council received the Annual Reports of the Chair of Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

79 PETITION - OUTCOME OF FLUORIDATION PETITION

The Report of the Chair of Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the Fluoridation Petition Inquiry Day was considered.

RESOLVED: That:
1 The Council, should the Strategic Health Authority or their successor be required by legislation in the future to

- consult on the fluoridation of drinking water, that Tamworth Borough Council respond accordingly and actively encourage the community to do likewise;
- 2 The Council request the Strategic Health Authority to publicise information for circulation on the benefits from fluoride being added to the water supply particularly in so far as it effects the local area;
 - 3 The Council request the Strategic Health Authority to commission further research into the effects of fluoridation and keeps the Council informed in relation thereof, and;
 - 4 The Council support the fluoridation of the water supply in Tamworth given the benefits to dental health.

(Moved by Councillor K Gant and seconded by Councillor A James)

80 LOCALISM ACT PAY POLICY

The Report of the Leader of the Council detailing Tamworth Borough Council's Pay Policy Statement so that statutory guidance as set out in S38 of the Localism Act 2011 is adhered to was considered.

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement be approved.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor M Gant)

The Mayor