



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 14th JULY 2015

PRESENT: Councillor M Gant (Chair), Councillors A Lunn, J Chesworth, M Clarke, S Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, A Couchman, M Couchman, S Doyle, J Faulkner, S Goodall, M Greatorex, G Hirons, R Kingstone, A James, T Madge, M McDermid, K Norchi, J Oates, M Oates, S Peuple, T Peuple, R Pritchard, R Rogers, E Rowe, P Seekings, P Standen and M Thurgood

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer), Christie Tims (Head of Organisational Development), Natalie Missenden (Public Relations Officer) and Ryan Keyte (Senior Legal Officer)

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Goodall

22 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor S Peuple)

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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

The Mayor paid tribute to two Tamworth Soldiers namely Leon Spicer and Philip Hewitt and also Richard Shearer from Nuneaton killed in Iraq on 17 July 2005 being their 10 year anniversary this week. At the same time the Mayor paid respects to the people that were murdered in Tunisia one being a lady of Tamworth who the Mayor had known since working with her sometime ago; may they all rest in peace. A minutes silence followed

Tina Clements wished the Mayor Many Happy Returns for her birthday on 16 July 2015

25 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor T Madge will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook, the following question:-

“Do you agree that it would be prudent to hold back on any sale and hearing of outline planning permission for 1100 houses on the old golf course land until we hear the result of the recent examination of the Local Plan from the Inspector, Mr FOX.

To press ahead when the report is close to publication would be counter productive should Mr FOX decide that the Local Plan is not sustainable?”

Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:-

Thank you Madam Mayor,

Cllr Madge, continuously pursuing the same end by using slightly different means takes up time, resource and capacity all at a cost to the taxpayer. Let's see if I can help you understand the bigger and more important picture and see if a light bulb actually comes on this time.....

In January 2013 I gave instructions to the CEO that it was time Tamworth Golf Centres owners were either evicted from the golf course or settled their arrears with the Council, thus the tax-payers of Tamworth.

Long story short, as we all know the company went into liquidation and the course closed to the public. The Council then re-opened the course for a projected 2 years using the last jam jar of contingencies we had, however this was hand in hand with a full review into the future of the site. All these documents are public knowledge and available.

As members will recall in March 2013 Full Council, cross party took the decision to withdraw our Local Plan from examination by the National Inspector after he raised concerns about our five-year land supply coming forward. Basically, he questioned the numbers allocated to Anker Valley and could we meet our housing need?

As members will be aware the first five years of the plan must show exactly how land and development will come forward. In partnership with Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council we commissioned a report, also available to the public, on the exact amount of houses Anker Valley could take considering the local infrastructure. The answer we got was a maximum of 700, thus we were correct to withdraw our local plan.

This is where two agendas began to converge. As the study into options for the golf course unfolded and we began to see we were far from meeting our housing need, solutions began to present themselves. There was no hidden agenda, no long term sabotage of the golf course, we did what sensible politicians do, we took a decision that solved problems and benefitted Tamworth long term. **This is not to say we allocated the golf course land to fix the local plan, the course was unsustainable as a leisure business and as open space thus after an options appraisal Cabinet choose to build houses to a) net the Council a capital receipt and b) more importantly to ensure the borough residents had quality house in the future. But yes the benefit was a balanced local plan for want of better wording.**

As Conservatives we were honest about this, we stood two elections firmly campaigning on the fact the old golf course would be developed, we won both elections. I call this a mandate to get on with it.

Therefore, as you know the decision to dispose of the site was taken in some time ago now in early 2014 and the sale process is underway. I'm not clear why delaying any sale until a report into the Local Plan examination would be counterproductive as Cllr Madge suggests.

We have a housing need in Tamworth which we cannot meet in our administrative area and we are relying on other Councils to help us deliver up to 2000 homes to meet our needs which is very challenging – the former Golf Course site will provide 1100 homes to meet Tamworth's needs – by proceeding with a sale it demonstrates that the site is deliverable and our housing needs would be met.

Without this development site, it is unlikely that our neighbours will take a further 1000. In fact North Warwickshire stated publically that unless we use the old golf course site they will not build a single unit for Tamworth and thus it is unlikely our Plan would be found sound – without an updated plan in place we will have less control over development.

With regards to delaying any hearing of the planning application for the redevelopment of the former golf course, my view is that when officers are satisfied that they have sufficient information and responses from statutory consultees to be able to make a recommendation to planning committee then they should not delay in taking an application to planning committee. The Government are clear that once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal as quickly as possible (NPPG Reference ID: 21b-001-20140306). As a member of planning committee Cllr Madge will be aware that each application will be determined on its own merits, with consideration given to the relevant development plan policies, relevant parts of the NPPF and any other material planning considerations.

IN CONCLUSION – There is no local plan without the golf course site.

IN SHORT – No I do not agree with Councillor Madge, nor his agenda to stifle growth and prosperity in this borough.

Supplementary Question:-

“You said to me recently that if it was proved that we did not have to build all of the houses then you would not do so. I have proof here this document HD19 submitted to the Inspector of the Local Plan so can we now build houses on fact based evidence rather than estimates?”

Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:-

Cllr Madge, you keep quoting the recent 2014 ONS population midyear estimates which show a drop in population between 2013 and 2014 of 45 people.

Yes the recent midyear estimates of POPULATION show a short drop. But HOUSING NEED i.e. HOUSEHOLDS is different to population.

We are required to undertake an “objectively Assessed housing Need”, which takes into account population projections, marital status composition, institutional population, headship rates to name a few.

Whilst Mid-Year Population Estimates provide useful context, this data represents only one year’s worth of data and provides a very brief snapshot in time. As such it should only be given limited weight, given the highly volatile nature of annual population growth.. Planning Practice Guidance states that *“household projections produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government should provide the starting point estimate of overall housing need”*

This is what we have done. The methodology has been found sound by independent Inspectors around the country and we are confident that the Inspector will also find our evidence base sound.

But here is a thought for you

Approx. 950 kids just left year 11 in Tamworth in June 2015 after GCSE’s. If we said for the sake of argument that 100 leave the borough and do not return this leaves us 850. If two thirds then got married / had kids themselves over coming years for arguments sake and the other third choose to live alone, we need an additional 566 homes just for this year’s school leavers.

However, that is not quite the case. Of course elderly will pass away over the course of the plan and as such house are recycled in a kind of way from one generation to the next. But this is where just looking at current population snapshots lets you down Cllr Madge for current Life Expectancy is

Men – 79.8

Women – 82.6

If you look at the retrospective trend line which shows that life expectancy has risen from 79 in women and just fewer than 74 for men since 1991-3. If the slope of the trend remains the same you could expect life expectancy to increase by another 6 years in men (to 86) and 3.5 in women (to 86) by 2030, although I cannot guarantee this. But if you think we have an aging population today, add on the 16 years left in the plan currently with the inspector and you must see that

fewer houses will recycle through the generations of Tamworth in future than have done previously.

There are economic factors that changes populations that you do not understand, especially in a growing economic picture.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 2

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor T Madge will ask the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Health, Councillor S Doyle, the following question:-

“With regard to the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Implementation can you explain how this will help the residents of Acorn Ridge who will no doubt be again suffering the problems of vehicles using Chiltern Road as a car park for the next Bank Holiday Market?”

Councillor S Doyle gave the following reply:-

At this point in time it is unlikely a proposed Public Space Protection Order will be in place or viable by the next Bank Holiday Market, although I have requested Officers to try, as there are a number of steps to be completed before the policy can be put to the test. Until the process is completed I am unable to determine if the problem highlighted satisfies the criteria for the introduction of a PSPO, and is a proportionate and reasonable thing to do.

As your aware approval of the implementation of the powers conferred to the Authority only became available as of **the 18th of June** after agreement via Cabinet.

Under the act (**ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014**), I have requested that the parking issues faced by the residents of the Chiltern Road estate on Bank Holidays are investigated to determine how this policy can be exercised to the benefit of the Residents.

(and to consider if a potential Public Space Protection Order can be used)

For background information, there have been no direct reports regarding actual complaints to the Council; however I am aware of concerns raised to Councillors, including myself and I have witnessed the situation for myself.

So with the help and guidance of Officers an impact survey has been produced and distributed to nearly every house on Chiltern; which simply requests information as to how the problem is affecting them for return by 27th July 2015.

(Show a copy)

I will also highlight that details of calls to the Police have been requested as part of the evidence test by Officers of the Council.

Reserve

As per the process outlined at Cabinet, we need to follow the process and in doing so present a strong body of evidence for this situation to qualify, for a PSPO, this is of importance as the support of our Partners will be needed.

Once the completed statements are received and as per the process all the evidence has been assessed, a recommendation can be made as to whether a Public Space Protection order is **relevant, proportionate** and further can be reasonably enforced on Bank Holidays.

This will then be placed for review at the next available Cabinet meeting and Scrutiny meeting as appropriate.

All information needs to be assessed – and also any resource implication of potential enforcement is agreed with both the Police and delegated officers of the Council.

However the issues raised so far, whilst ongoing, may not meet the criteria and I would not wish to raise resident's hopes until the process is completed.

(Please note it is unlikely there would be a mechanism for the public to 'call in emergency').

All Councillors will be kept informed as to any outcome which will be posted in the Members Bulletin.

For Reference:

These tests are

- Activities carried out in a public place within the local authority's area have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those living in the locality OR
- It is likely that activities will be carried out in a public place within the area that will have such an effect.

The effect or likely effect of the activities:

- Is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature OR
- Is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable and justifies the restrictions imposed by the order

Due to requirements I've highlighted of ensuring all criteria is met for PSPO implementation, gathering of evidence and consultation with partners and public, it would seem unlikely that this will be resolved before 31st August 2015.

Supplementary Question:-

"Thanks for the answer. It's nice to get answers to questions without comments like earlier. Can I request that we work together as ward Councillors to try to find a solution to the problem?"

Councillor S Doyle gave the following reply:-

It's not so much the co-operation between the Councillors that is important it's between partners because to enforce it we need the support of our partners and we need to ensure the police to be there and helping us on the day. Unfortunately this is not going to be ready for the next bank holiday but I envisage it will be ready for the one after.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 3

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor M Couchman will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management, Councillor M Thurgood, the following question:-

"Can you tell me how many homeless people have been placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation since January 1st 2015, and how long was their average stay?"

Councillor M Thurgood gave the following reply:-

Between January 2015 and the end of June 2015 there have been 77 household placed in Temporary Accommodation and the average stay is 52 nights.

Supplementary Question:-

"This will have been a great expense to the Council! What are you proposing to do to save the Council money and causing homeless people so much distress?"

Councillor M Thurgood gave the following reply:-

We are looking at working with people in such accommodation and see if we can give a whole care package. New policies will be going forward to Cabinet for Tenants Accommodation which is to increase accommodation availability and also to work with partners.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 4

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor M Couchman will ask the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management, Councillor M Thurgood, the following question:-

"How many children under the age of 5 years were placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation since January 1st 2015?"

Councillor M Thurgood gave the following reply:-

There have been 18 under 5 year olds placed in Temporary Accommodation since January 2015 from 17 individual households.

Supplementary Question:-

“I know that at least two families spent 8 weeks in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and I would just like to ask you how these parents adequately and economically feed their children let alone help them to meet their milestones and emotional and wellbeing development?”

Councillor M Thurgood gave the following reply:-

Happy to meet with you to discuss any of the families that you are concerned about.

26 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That members of the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

27 AUGMENTED PAYMENTS

The Report of the Leader of the Council to agree additional compensation for members of Corporate Management Team in order to facilitate temporary senior management arrangements was withdrawn

The Mayor