

## **BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

at a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Kettering held at the Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering on 18th December 2013

Present:

|            |                            |            |                   |
|------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Councillor | Keli Watts (Mayor)         | Councillor | James Hakewill    |
| "          | Duncan Bain (Deputy Mayor) | "          | Eileen Hales, MBE |
| "          | Linda Adams                | "          | David Howes       |
| "          | Maurice Bayes              | "          | Ian Jelley        |
| "          | Steve Bellamy              | "          | Christopher Lamb  |
| "          | David Bishop               | "          | Shirley Lynch     |
| "          | Michael Brown              | "          | Mary Malin        |
| "          | Jonathan Bullock           | "          | Paul Marks        |
| "          | Lloyd Bunday               | "          | Cliff Moreton     |
| "          | Mark Dearing               | "          | Russell Roberts   |
| "          | June Derbyshire            | "          | Jan Smith         |
| "          | Maggie Don                 | "          | David Soans       |
| "          | Scott Edwards              | "          | Margaret Talbot   |
| "          | Terry Freer                | "          | Michael Tebbutt   |
| "          | Michelle George            | "          | Jonathan West     |
| "          | Ruth Groome                | "          | Derek Zanger      |

*(Prior to commencement of the meeting the Wren Spinney Community Special School Choir entertained members with festive songs.)*

### **13.C.13 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Henson, Hollobone, Manns and Mills.

### **13.C.14 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**13.C.15      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Roberts, Lamb, Jelley, Dearing, Brown, Bellamy Smith and Zanger

**13.C.16      MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made the following announcements:-

- The Mayor informed Council of the death of former Mayor, John Faller, in October. John was Mayor in 1991/92 and represented St Giles Ward in Desborough. The Mayor also informed Council of the death of former Councillor, Gilbert Davies, who passed away in October. Gilbert represented St Michael's Ward from 1987 to 1995 and following his retirement was a lay member of Kettering Town Forum and various partnership bodies. Letters of condolence had been sent by the Mayor on behalf of the Council.
- The Mayor asked Council to also remember Nelson Mandela who had passed away recently and informed Council that a book of remembrance was available to sign in the reception area.
- The Mayor announced that the Civic Ball had raised approximately £2,200 for the Mayor's Charity.
- Holocaust Memorial Day would be held this year in the Council Chamber at 3.00 pm on Sunday, 26th January. All Councillors were invited to attend.
- The Mayor invited members and officers to the Parlour for refreshments after the meeting.

**13.C.17      LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader congratulated the Wren Spinney School Choir on their excellent performance and extended Season's Greetings to all present.

The Leader advised Council of the conversion of the warden's house at The Lawns into two 1-bed flats and other improvements at Windsor Gardens.

**13.C.18**      **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive circulated a paper to members which gave a summary of the Council's grant settlement for 2014/15 and a projected settlement for 2015/16. He advised members that this information would be fed through to the Executive Committee at its next meeting and incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Chief Executive also gave a brief summary of the main points contained in the Autumn Statement, particularly in respect of New Homes Bonus and Business Rates. He also advised members of efficiency savings identified over the last five years and projected savings for the next four years. It was noted that Kettering was performing significantly better than its regional neighbours.

It was announced that Kettering Borough Council had won three IRRV Awards, one gold and two silver, since the last meeting of the Council. Councillors and staff were thanked for their support in respect of this achievement.

On behalf of himself and staff colleagues, the Chief Executive wished the Mayor and Members best wishes for the festive season.

**13.C.19**      **RIGHT TO SPEAK**

Jill Powell of Age Concern UK indicated that she wished to speak on item 10(ii) under the Council's Right to Speak policy.

**13.C.20**      **FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE EAST KETTERING LIAISON FORUM**

A report was submitted which sought approval for proposed changes to the Constitution and Terms of Reference of the East Kettering Liaison Forum.

It was noted that consultation had been carried out between 1st August and 2nd September 2013 and the Executive had considered a report containing the responses to the consultation at its meeting held on 16th October 2013.

The recommendations made by the Executive were outlined by the Portfolio Holder.

A minor amendment in respect of the proposed observer status of the Planning Committee Chair was agreed as follows:-

*"Observer status to be accorded to KBC Planning Committee Chair. If the Planning Committee Chair is not a member of the Forum they shall be entitled to observer status."*

During debate it was noted that although there was no constitutional reason why the Chair of the East Kettering Liaison Forum should not be a member of the Planning Committee, this was an issue that could be taken into consideration by the Forum when electing a Chair in the future.

**RESOLVED** that the revised Constitution and Terms of Reference of the East Kettering Liaison Forum (attached as an Appendix to these minutes) be approved with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

(Voting: Unanimous)

**13.C.21**      **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

A report was considered which clarified how the Special Responsibility Allowance payment (SRA) payments to the Executive should operate following changes in the number of the Executive members.

**RESOLVED** that the clarification received by Professor Leach (as outlined in paragraph 2.7 of the report) be noted, that the Executive SRAs be calculated on this basis and the Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended to reflect the new calculation.

(Voting: 29 for; 0 against 1 not voting)

**13.C.22      STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT**

A report was submitted which provided Council with the activities of the Standards Advisory Committee for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

Julie Miller, the Independent Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee, addressed Council and presented the annual report for information, noting that the Monitoring Officer had not received any formal complaints under the new arrangements since adoption on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Report be noted.

(Voting: Unanimous)

**13.C.23      HS2**

A motion that had previously been put forward by Councillor Bullock as part of the agenda for the meeting was withdrawn by the proposer and seconder with the agreement of the Council.

It was noted that the Research and Development Committee had set up a task and finish group in respect of this matter which would begin work in the new year.

**RESOLVED** that the motion be withdrawn.

**13.C.24      DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES – AGE UK**

Jill Powell of Age UK addressed the Council under the Right to Speak policy and advised that Dementia Friend awareness sessions were free of charge and lasted between 45 minutes and one hour.

In discussion members agreed that the awareness-raising sessions were an opportunity for councillors and staff to show support to the community. It was, however, felt that training should be arranged in such a way as to minimise the impact on service provision and staff resources.

It was proposed by Councillor Don, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and subsequently

**RESOLVED** that this Council will support the government's initiative to create 'Dementia Friendly Communities' by giving all front line staff and councillors the opportunity to attend a one-off awareness session to become a 'Dementia Friend' delivered by Age UK Northamptonshire.

(Voting: Unanimous)

### **13.C.25 VISITS BY CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

Councillor Jonathan Bullock asked the Leader of the Council the following question:-

*"I note the visit by 25 Chinese Government officials to the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Were the concerns of local residents (including some in the local Chinese community) about human rights issues in China raised with this visiting delegation?"*

Councillor Roberts responded as follows:-

*"No".*

Councillor Bullock then asked the following supplementary question:-

*"The Prime Minister made it clear that this issue would be raised on all official visits. Amnesty International claim that half a million Chinese people are being detained without trial. If there is a future visit by this country could a question be asked about human rights?"*

Councillor Roberts responded as follows:-

*"Great Britain is a small but great nation that believes in freedom for the world. The Prime Minister and ministers have spent a lot of time on this issue and work hard at making sure issues such as this are raised. The Chinese officials accepted an invitation to the Borough when on a nationwide visit. They came to us looking for advice and help in better ways of providing services*

*to support and help people. If there is a local issue then we would look at this. It was great to meet and talk to people. Things are changing in China. Nelson Mandela believed it was not about castigating people but challenging them to be better people in the future.*

**13.C.26 CAR PARKING CHARGES**

Councillor Bullock asked the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration the following question:-

*"Given the boost free parking on Saturday has given to Kettering Town Centre at Christmas can this not be extended for the tougher trading months of January and February?"*

Councillor Zanger responded as follows:-

*"The Christmas parking concessions are a one-off seasonal trial. Future concessions, if any, will be determined by the assessed success of this trial. As with all concessions, there are associated costs."*

Councillor Bullock asked a supplementary question as follows:-

*"Does Councillor Zanger agree with Eric Pickles when he says that councils that do not offer motorists free parking for up to 30 minutes near local high streets are failing in their duty to small businesses and local residents?"*

Councillor Zanger responded as follows:-

*"No."*

**13.C.27 THE ROLE OF LOCALISM IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

Councillor Bullock asked the Deputy Leader of the Council the following question:-

*"I was promised a written response at the last Council meeting to my question about the role of Localism in the planning system. I do not seem to have received a reply."*

Councillor Lamb responded as follows:-

*"The Localism Act introduced a number of measures which the government said was designed to shift the emphasis of power away from central government and towards local people. In respect of the planning system, those measures included for example, the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies, and the introduction of neighbourhood planning, community right to build and the duty to cooperate, as well as reforms to certain areas of public consultation, the community infrastructure levy and the way planning policy is made. The issue of how and when these measures might influence the planning system is a complex one that cannot be easily addressed through this reply. Further detailed explanation regarding these issues has been, and will continue to be, provided through periodic member information evenings, as well as training events for parish councils."*

Councillor Bullock asked a supplementary question as follows:-

*"Does Councillor Lamb agree with UKIP about the need to hold local referenda on large housing schemes?"*

Councillor Lamb responded as follows:-

*"This is not an issue that has been raised at this moment in time and so there is no answer to give. There can be referenda on land developed by town and parish councils, but there is nothing on our agenda."*

*"Kettering is always ahead of the curve in consulting with members of the public in all things we do. Other authorities have no form of consultation in advance. In Barton Ward officers have continually consulted on the large housing scheme. At meetings of the East Kettering Liaison Forum members of the public are vociferous. I applaud staff as they go beyond their call of duty. We are trying to get a better structure for the East Kettering Liaison Forum and improve consultation, eg by the quarterly newsletter. We do consult members of the public on all aspects in the future development of East Kettering."*

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.10 pm)

Signed .....

The Mayor

AI