



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL
THURSDAY 20 JUNE 2013**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillor B Buschman - Mayor
Councillor R Hetherington – Deputy Mayor

Councillors L J Abbey, R A Adair, Mrs S P Bailey, J R Bannister, D G Bell, Mrs D M Boote, S J Boote, N K Boughton-Smith, N A Brown, R L Butler, H A Chewings, J N Clarke, T Combellack, L B Cooper, J E Cottee, J A Cranswick, A M Dickinson, J E Fearon, J E Greenwood, M G Hemsley, R M Jones, K A Khan, I I Korn, N C Lawrence, E J Lungley, A MacInnes, Mrs M M Males, S E Mallender, Mrs J M Marshall, D J Mason, F J Mason, G S Moore, B A Nicholls, E A Plant, F A Purdue-Horan, S J Robinson, D V Smith, Mrs J A Smith, P Smith, J A Stockwood, Mrs M Stockwood, B Tansley, J E Thurman, H Tipton, T Vennett-Smith, D G Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr A Gregory Nottinghamshire Royal British Legion
Lieutenant Colonel K Price East Midlands Universities Officer Training Corps
Councillor Fisher Shelford and Newton Parish Council
5 Members of the public

OFFICERS PRESENT:

A Graham Chief Executive
D Mitchell Executive Manager - Communities
V Nightingale Senior Member Support Officer
L Reid-Jones Democratic Services Manager
P Steed Executive Manager – Finance and Commercial
D Swaine Executive Manager - Operations & Corporate Governance

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors G Davidson and G R Mallender

Members sent their best wishes to Councillor Davidson and his wife.

OPENING PRAYER

The Meeting was led in prayer by the Mayor's Chaplain

10. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

11. **Signing of the Community Covenant on behalf of the Armed Forces**

The Mayor welcomed Lieutenant Colonel Price and Mr Gregory to the meeting. He reminded Members that in June 2012 the Council had resolved to pledge its support to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. He stated that work had been undertaken to develop the Covenant and that tonight's signing would formalise the Council's commitment.

The Mayor, Lieutenant Colonel Price and Mr Gregory signed the Covenant.

After signing the Covenant Councillor Buschman stated that this was an important commitment undertaken by the Council to work together with the Armed Forces and other partners for the benefit of all of the residents both service personnel and civilians. He informed Members that a dedicated Armed Forces page had been created on the Council's website and that there would, in future, be a regular feature in the Council's magazine 'Rushcliffe Reports'. He believed that the local community should be encouraged to show its support at various events on Armed Forces Day, 29 June, including the national celebrations at Victoria Embankment and the Council's Proms in the Park at Bridgford Park. In conclusion, he stated that the Council had great respect for the dedication and sacrifice made by the Armed Forces personnel and that the Council was proud to be part of this partnership.

In response Lieutenant Colonel Price thanked Members for supporting the Covenant and for the Council's continued support to exiting service personnel who were returning to the community. He looked forward to working with the Council in the future.

In thanking Councillors Mr Gregory read a poem from a serving officer and its response from the County's chaplain.

12. **Petition**

Shelford and Newton Parish Councillor J Fisher presented a petition to the Council on behalf of the residents of Shelford and Newton. He explained that when the Parish Council had been formed both Shelford and Newton had been small rural villages, and whilst Shelford had remained small Newton had grown. He believed this was due to the establishment of RAF Newton and since its closure the increase in residential housing. Furthermore a new housing development was proposed. He added that there were now two separate villages with two different agendas, with Newton seeking additional community facilities whilst Shelford was concerned with flooding and gravel extraction. Parish Councillor Fisher stated that in the 2009 Parish Plan residents had identified that there were two separate communities and it had been recognised that there was a growing desire to split the Parish Council. As such support from villagers had been sought, and although only 250 signatures were required for the petition this had easily been exceeded with 351 signatures. Parish Councillor Fisher stated that:

"Shelford and Newton Parish Council hereby petition Rushcliffe Borough Council to undertake a community governance review in order to permit the cessation of the existing parish council and in its place to create a separate parish council for both Shelford and Newton."

The Mayor thanked Councillor Fisher for presenting the petition and for his remarks. He referred the petition to the Chief Executive for action.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 May 2013 were received as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

14. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor informed Council that he and his wife had attended 10 engagements during his first month of office, including Civic Services, the Bingham Town Fair, Soar Boating Club's 60th anniversary and two excellent concerts. He explained that he had attended the Nottingham Boys High School's Founders Day service to commemorate 500 years.

He had also attended two royal events, the Buckingham Palace Garden Party and presentation of new colours to the Mercia Regiment.

15. Leader's Announcements

Councillor Clarke reported that he, the Chief Executive and the Lead Local Plan Officer had met Nick Bowles, the Planning Minister, to put forward the Council's view regarding the Local Plan, especially in relation to businesses in the area. He informed Members that notes of the meeting were available if anyone required them.

16. Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the first market to be held by the YouNG group on 6 July. He encouraged Members to promote and support this event for young entrepreneurs.

17. Community Governance Review - Edwalton

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance regarding a Community Governance Review in Edwalton. He informed Members that Council had received a valid petition in September 2012 from residents requesting the establishment of a parish council for Edwalton. Progressing the petition had been deferred until completion of the Borough wide electoral review, undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. He explained that the electoral review had now been concluded and that the Council was required to carry out a Community Governance Review in the Edwalton Village Borough Ward in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The report set out the key issues to be considered and outlined the area being reviewed on which the petition was based, this primarily being the Borough's current Edwalton Village Ward and small parts of Musters, Gamston and Tollerton Wards.

Councillor Clarke stated that it had been considered by Cabinet that it would be necessary to set up a cross party Member Group in order to progress the

review, with the terms of reference as set out in appendix four of the report. He highlighted the key stages in the review timetable which would begin with a consultation exercise from the end of June until 16 August 2013. He reminded Council that Members were considering the process of the review and not the merits of establishing a parish council in Edwalton.

Councillor Boote supported the recommendations stating that this process was an example of localism. He believed that this would lead to better representation, however he recognised that the 14% who had signed the petition was not a large number. He believed that the amount of work would be a considerable burden for officers, especially as this needed to be concluded in time for the local elections in 2015. He added that the area should be co-terminus with the new Borough Ward that would come into effect in 2015.

In supporting the recommendations Councillor Boote felt that the residents of Edwalton should be given as much information as possible in order for them to be able to answer two questions, firstly will I be better represented, listened to and have a greater say, and secondly what would this cost.

Councillors Bannister and S Mallender supported the review.

In response to Councillor Boote, Councillor Clarke stated that the work that had to be undertaken was the cost of democracy.

RESOLVED that Council:

- a) approved the process involved for the delivery of a Community Governance Review, the proposed timetable and the associated resource implications;
- b) approved the terms of reference for the Community Governance Review (appendix 2) in order that the process can commence in line with the proposed timetable (appendix 3);
- c) endorsed Cabinet's decision to establish a cross party Member Group to consider the Council's position in response to the consultation to be undertaken as part of the review;
- d) approved the Member Group terms of reference (appendix 4);

18. Local Government Boundary Commission Review – Implications for Rushcliffe

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance regarding the implications of the recent Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Review. He reminded Members that this was a technical item as the LGBCE had commenced a review of ward boundaries in Rushcliffe in January 2012 and had published its final report in February 2013. The review had recommended a reduction in the number of councillors to 44 across 25 wards. The proposals would be laid before Parliament and would come into effect at the Borough elections in May 2015. The report summarised the implications of the

Boundary Commission's report and set out three key areas of work required in preparation for implementing the changes so that they were in place for the local elections in 2015. The three areas were:

- Consideration of the impact on councillor positions as a consequence of the reduced number of councillors
- If necessary, consideration of a review of the Members' Allowance Scheme by an Independent Remuneration Panel
- The delivery of a Borough wide Polling District Review in order to implement the changes to ward boundaries and ensure the correct allocation of polling districts and polling places.

In support Councillor Boote stated that this was the first change in 12 years and would entail more work for officers to ensure that everything was in place for the local elections in 2015. He regretted the fact that the number of councillors would be reduced to 44 and felt that this would lead to residents receiving a lower standard of representation. He urged Members to resist reducing the scope of scrutiny following the implementation of this review. He also stated that a review of Polling Stations, Members' Allowances and the Community Support Scheme allocation would be required.

Councillor MacInnes, in support of the review, stated that this was a short report on a complicated issue. He raised concerns and sought assurances, on behalf of opposition Members and backbenchers that a review of the committee structure should be carried out in an open and transparent manner by scrutiny or a Member Panel, not just by Group Leaders. He stated that the review of Members' Allowances, which was to be presented to Council in December 2014, was mis-timed as this would only be a few weeks before the election campaigns started for the local elections in 2015.

Whilst supporting the review, Councillor Mallender also regretted the reduction in the number of councillors.

Councillor Jones supported the comments and hoped that the Council would remain a place of lively debate and good scrutiny.

In response Councillor Clarke stated that the reduction in the number of councillors would result in equality of representation. He also believed that this would allow for more engagement by all Members of the Council.

RESOLVED that Council:

- a) approved and recognised the key areas of work required in order to implement the Local Boundary Commission for England's recommendations; and
- b) receive further reports in respect of these key work areas as and when necessary.

19. To Answer Question under Standing Order 11 (2)

Question from Councillor S J Boote to Councillor D G Bell

“How many social housing tenants in Rushcliffe are being affected by the reduction in housing benefit consequent on having a spare bedroom, sometimes referred to as the "bedroom tax"?”

In response Councillor Bell stated that this was not a bedroom tax. He informed Council, that as at the end of April 2013 there were 564 cases affected by the Spare Room Subsidy. 484 of which were subject to the 14% reduction for one spare bedroom and 80 were subject to the 25% reduction for two spare bedrooms.

As a supplementary Councillor S J Boote asked what the Council was doing to encourage Metropolitan Housing and other social landlords to help.

Councillor Bell explained that the Housing Options Team was working with all claimants with Metropolitan Housing Trust and other Registered Social Landlords. Through this advice and work with the Revenue and Benefits Sections, Citizen’s Advice Bureau and the Credit Union the number of people affected in Rushcliffe had been reduced from the 615 originally identified. 33 cases had already been reviewed and other cases were being considered. He was pleased to inform Members that by using this corporate approach and by working with partners the Council was able to help its residents.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

MAYOR