

These minutes are subject to
ratification at the next Council Meeting



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL
THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER 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, G Davidson, A M Dickinson, J E Fearon, M G Hemsley, R M Jones, K A Khan, I I Korn, N C Lawrence, E J Lungley, A MacInnes, Mrs M M Males, G R Mallender, S E Mallender, 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 and D G Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

98 Members of the public

OFFICERS PRESENT:

A Goodman	Member Support Officer
A Graham	Chief Executive
R Mapletoft	Planning Policy Manager
V Nightingale	Senior Member Support Officer
P Randle	Local Plan Lead Officer
P Steed	Executive Manager – Finance and Commercial
D Swaine	Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors J E Greenwood and Mrs J M Marshall

OPENING PRAYER

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

33. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

34. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26 September 2013 were received as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

35. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor informed Council that he had attended 55 functions since the last Council meeting. These had included the Bingham Fair, Goose Fair, a recital by a Norwegian Choir and the Council's Sports and Community Awards evenings. He stated that he had attended four Remembrance Day services, the Armistice Day service and that 40 wreaths had been laid on behalf of the Borough Council. He informed Members that he would be helping to provide dinner on Christmas Day at the Friary in West Bridgford. He stated that, on behalf of the Council, he had sent a letter of condolence to South Africa on the death of Nelson Mandella.

36. Leader's Announcements

The Leader informed Council that he had been proud to attend two events; firstly when a national award in the Britain in Bloom competition had been given to Barton in Fabis; and secondly the Make Cotgrave Smile project had been given recognition and officers and other partners had received commendations from the Chief Constable.

37. Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive informed Members that the Council's Benefits Team had been awarded Team of the Year by the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation. He also stated that the YouNG project had been given a national Youth on Board award by their peers from the British Youth Council.

38. Petitions

Councillor Mason presented a petition on behalf of Tollerton Against Backdoor Urbanisation to the Mayor. The petition read:

In our view the proposals to extend the Green Belt beyond the ring road on the south east of Nottingham, allowing urban sprawl to spread into Tollerton parish with the prospect of thousands of houses swamping a village of 850 households, will destroy the identity of the village, pose a real threat to the environment and would result in a loss of leisure, visual amenity and quality of life for the residents of Tollerton.

We call on all planning authorities, local, regional and central government and, if necessary, the Secretary of State to preserve the defensible boundaries of the green belt, to exclude the proposals for housing in Tollerton from the development framework and to refuse permission for any similar developments in Tollerton and Bassingfield.

The petition was received without discussion and referred to the Chief Executive.

Mr M Tisbury presented a petition on behalf of Holme Pierrepont and Gamston Parish Council. The petition related to the open spaces in Gamston that were no longer being maintained by Bovis Homes. He stated that, when planning permission was granted in the 1980's, pieces of land had been set aside for the benefit of the residents and these were maintained by Bovis Homes for

many years. However, local residents had now been informed that there was only money available for safety works. The issue of the maintenance of these areas had been raised on many occasions and over 1,000 people, which was a significant proportion of the parish, had signed the petition which called on the Council to resolve the issue.

Mr Tisbury presented the petition to the Mayor which read:

We the undersigned petition Rushcliffe Borough Council to

- i) Open negotiations with Bovis Homes for the transfer of the land, and*
- ii) For Rushcliffe Borough Council to make provision in its 2014/15 budget to maintain such land.*

The petition was received without discussion and referred to the Chief Executive.

39. Rushcliffe Core Strategy – Proposed Modifications

Councillor Clarke stated that this important item affected nearly every person in the Borough and would shape the area for at least the next 15 years. He informed Members that this report was the culmination of many years work, starting with the Government's approach for a Regional Spatial Strategy. He reminded Members that 16,500 houses had been allocated to the Borough, however the Council, after public consultation, had approved a strategy with only 9,600. When considered by the Planning Inspector this strategy had been found unsound and the Council had been advised to increase the number of houses by 3,550. Councillor Clarke stated that the proposed strategy also included policies to address issues such as employment provision, economic development, town and local centres, regeneration, gypsies and travellers, historic environment, culture, tourism and sport, green infrastructure, biodiversity, transport infrastructure, etc and therefore he was reluctantly recommending it for approval by Council.

In proposing the recommendation Councillor Clarke reminded Members that this strategy reflected the huge amount of detailed work carried out by officers and, the deliberations and consideration of the issues by the cross party Member Group. He stated that an extensive consultation exercise had taken place and that residents' views and opinions had been considered. He said that the Council's engagement with the public had exceeded the Authority's legal requirements. He felt that by approving the recommendation and adhering to the due process of adopting a Local Plan the Authority was acting responsibly and in the best interest of the Borough. If the Council did not adopt a Plan then it would have no defence against uncontrolled and unwanted planning applications. A 'no Plan' approach would allow developers to build where it was deemed inappropriate and the Council would not have a say in what supporting facilities and infrastructure would be required.

With reference to the consultation Councillor Clarke stated that work had been undertaken with authorities in the Greater Nottingham Housing Market area to ensure that the future growth of Rushcliffe and Greater Nottingham as a whole was taken into account. This work included consideration of the infrastructure

implications and how these could be mitigated. He also stated that work had been carried out with the towns and larger villages in the Borough to ensure the future vibrancy and vitality of those communities.

Councillor Clarke stated that, in accordance with Government Policy, most of the housing growth proposed was on the urban edge and on the Borough's major brownfield sites, ie the Cotgrave Colliery site, former RAF Newton site and Tollerton Airport. Also included within the proposed allocation areas of employment land had been identified as the Council wished to encourage new businesses and economic development opportunities. He acknowledged that there were changes being proposed to a small percentage of green belt land but he re-iterated that this was also in accordance with Government Policy.

In conclusion, Councillor Clarke stated that the modifications set out in the report had been proposed by the cross party Working Group to Cabinet, who were now recommending their approval by Council. He reminded Members that, if approved, the Core Strategy would be put out for a six week consultation period before being submitted to the Planning Inspector for her examination in public.

Finally, with reference to his previous comments Councillor Clarke urged Members to support this proposal as he believed it was the best compromise available under difficult circumstances.

Councillor Bell, in seconding the recommendation, stated that this was a large and complex document. As Chairman of the Working Group he thanked officers for their hard work and the research that had been undertaken. He also thanked the members of the Working Group for their thorough deliberations of the raft of policies contained within the Strategy. He stated that these policies were important and ensured that the Council had sound planning processes, and therefore protection, for the next 15 years.

With regards to the strategic housing allocation Councillor Bell reminded Members that the policy must conform with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework and had to be evidenced based and be objectively assessed as sound, viable and deliverable. Also it must be evidenced that the Council had fulfilled its duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities, He believed that if the Local Plan failed then development in Rushcliffe would be developer led which would be disastrous for the Borough as it would probably involve more housing and larger land take than being proposed in the Core Strategy. He recognised that not all development should be viewed negatively as it could bring significant benefits for the community, including affordable housing, which could help future generations of young people to be able to live in the Borough rather than having to move out to cheaper locations.

In summing up Councillor Bell requested a recorded vote.

Councillor Davidson also thanked the officers and the Working Group for their lengthy and detailed discussions over a long period of time which had culminated in the report being put before Council. He recognised that the number of houses that had to be allocated was a fait au compli and that the Borough Council did not have a choice, although he felt that this was not in the

spirit of localism. On behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group he proposed an amendment to the recommendation to:

1. that the proposed modifications to the Rushcliffe Core Strategy Publication Draft, as highlighted at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, should be approved subject to the following changes:
 - reducing the number of homes required at the Melton Road, Edwalton site from 1500 to 1200 and allocating 150 extra homes to the South of Clifton site and 150 extra to the Gamston (north of Tollerton) site;
 - setting a minimum requirement for affordable housing as 40% of the dwellings in the urban area (defined as West Bridgford except for Edwalton) and 30% elsewhere;
 - the proposals for transport and green infrastructure being changed to ensure that significant improvements are provided at all allocated sites;
 - after the above have been done, proceeding with the recommendations in sub-sections 2, 3 and 4.

In proposing the amendments to the recommendation Councillor Davidson believed that it would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and also would not hinder the process of the Core Strategy being adopted. He stated that there were negative impacts to development, especially to the environment and that these should be minimised as much as possible. He believed that there was a serious flaw in the process in the fact that no account had been taken of numerous, large developments in neighbouring authorities which would have a significant impact on the Borough's infrastructure.

With regard to affordable housing he felt that the Council should have more than a desire to protect this requirement and he felt that the Borough had been pressured into accepting a lower target than had previously been set by this Authority. The Council currently had a 30% target and it still left a shortfall between demand and availability. Also in respect of the environment and transport infrastructure the wording of the policy left too many caviats and loopholes for developers to argue that it would render the site unsustainable.

In conclusion Councillor Davidson stated that in respect of the amendment it was proposed that the development at Melton Road, Edwalton, known as Sharphill, should be reduced to the previous number of houses, 1,200, and slightly increase the number at two of the other sites. Also the amendment increased the target for affordable housing to 40% for the urban areas of West Bridgford and 30% for the rest of the Borough. The amendment also requested significant improvements to the transport and green infrastructure contained within the Strategy.

Councillor Boote seconded the amendment stating that the housing, wildlife and transport at Sharphill needed to be balanced. He did not feel that the

developers statement that 1,200 houses was not viable on the site and needed to be increased was valid. He did not believe that the Council should decide on viability and developers' profit and that this should be left for the market to decide.

With regard to affordable housing Councillor Boote stated that the Council should insist on a minimum target of 40% for the urban areas and 30% elsewhere and not just seek. Even with this target he was sure that developers would want to build in the Borough and that they would make a profit.

In rejection of the amendment Councillor Bell informed Members that viability was a significant issue. As a local authority had to ensure that any development was deliverable under the auspices of the National Planning Policy Framework. The amendment to the Sharphill development would significantly alter its viability whilst increasing the risk, in the Inspector's view, of the Gamston scheme not being deliverable. He also stated that the increase in the Barton site would increase the density of the location and there would be further loss of open spaces.

Councillor Jones, in support of the amendment, reminded Members that the Council had removed large numbers of applicants from the housing waiting list as they would be unlikely to be offered a home. By not accepting the amendment he felt that the Council would be letting down the young people of Rushcliffe who would find it difficult to find a house or a job. He believed that the Strategy failed with regard to infrastructure especially along the A52.

In respect of the Sharphill development Councillor Jones stated that the current proposals were contradictory to the 2009 approval regarding the community park, road access to Musters Road, buslinks, etc. The new proposals would increase the probability that Musters Road would become a rat run. He accepted that the density could be increased and therefore a few more houses could be included however he did not support 300 extra homes. He also did not accept that the gap between the houses and the nature reserve should be decreased which could lead to the loss of the open space.

Councillor D Boote, stated that affordability is a large issue in Rushcliffe especially as the average house price was 8 times the average earnings, therefore making it more difficult for many families to afford a home. It was important that the target for affordable housing was kept at 30% as a minimum and should not be negotiated down. She was pleased to see that the west of Sharphill was being protected but this proposal would still lead to a loss of woodland.

Councillor Bannister stated that, on behalf of the Labour Group, they would not be supporting the amendment. He informed Members that the Planning Inspector would look at viability when considering the soundness of the Core Strategy. He agreed that everyone would like to see more affordable housing in the area and it had been raised at a Local Development Framework meeting that this could be revisited in the future. He was not in favour of amending the numbers as this was just redistributing the issue from one area to another. He did support the need for a Plan and hoped that the Inspector would find it sound.

Councillor Khan stated he supported the amendment and reminded Members that there had been a planning inquiry in 2009 regarding the Sharphill site and the Inspector's decision was for 1,200 houses with conditions to prohibit travel flow. He felt that the Council should not consider the developers profits but the interests of its residents and keep to the original proposals for this site.

Councillor Mrs Stockwood in opposition to the amendment agreed with Councillor Bell that viability and deliverability had to be considered when looking at sites.

Councillor Vennett-Smith stated that he would abstain from the vote on the amendment as it proposed an extra 150 houses within his ward, which was already subject to the loss of greenbelt land due to the 3,500 houses already proposed, the widening of the A453 and the NET developments.

Councillor Lawrence informed Councillor Jones that he had chaired the group that had scrutinised the housing waiting list and that it had been reduced by removing the duplicated names and the people who were not in housing need, therefore it now gave a more accurate figure for the Council to take into account when making such decisions. He stated that the proposed Plan would lead to 3,500 to 4,000 affordable homes.

Councillor Mallender stated that the Green Party supported the increase for affordable housing and the green infrastructure, which he felt was often lost. However, he would be abstaining from the vote on the amendment as he could not support the movement of the housing numbers. He also did not want to see an increase in the land take at the Sharphill site.

Councillor Abbey supported the amendment in respect of the provision of affordable housing, especially for young families.

In summing up Councillor Davidson requested a recorded vote on the amendment. In answer to some of the comments made he stated that some sites in the Core Strategy had already been granted planning permission with diluted conditions in respect of affordable housing. Also that there were many young people who were not on the housing list but would require an affordable home if it was available. He stated that the housing numbers in the Strategy were very elastic and therefore these could be increased by developers upon negotiation. In support of the amendment he spoke of the need for good infrastructure, including public transport, to sustain these developments.

In response to the amendment Councillor Clarke reminded Members that profit was not a planning consideration whereas viability was. He stated that the Council had to work with developers for the benefit of the residents. If the site at Sharphill was not viable the houses would not be built and therefore the Inspector could reject the Local Plan as being unsound. He stated that the Council had listened to many residents and stakeholders as the process had taken over five years to complete. Councillor Clarke stated that the amendment also proposed that Edwalton, and Sharphill, should have a different target for affordable housing than the urban area of West Bridgford, which he did not agree with.

On being put to the vote the Amendment was lost.

Recorded Vote on the Amendment

For

Councillors L J Abbey, Mrs D M Boote, S J Boote, G Davidson, R M Jones and K A Khan (6)

Against

Councillors R A Adair, Mrs S P Bailey, J R Bannister, D G Bell, N K Boughton-Smith, N A Brown, B Buschman, R L Butler, H A Chewings, J N Clarke, T Combella, L B Cooper, J E Cottee, J A Cranswick, A M Dickinson, J E Fearon, M G Hemsley, R Hetherington, I I Korn, N C Lawrence, E J Lungley, A MacInnes, Mrs M M Males, 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 and D G Wheeler (39)

Abstain

Councillors G R Mallender, S E Mallender and T Vennett-Smith (3)

Speaking on the original motion Councillor MacInnes stated that the housing requirement was a key issue with many properties proposed for the urban fringe. The Council had to take a share of the housing that was required for the principal urban area, the City of Nottingham, as their boundaries were constrained and did not easily accommodate large developments. As part of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework the Council had a duty to provide provision for homes, including affordable homes, for future generations. He reminded Members that the Council had made three attempts to produce a Local Plan. It was essential that the Council retained its status as a planning authority and that developments were not decided 'on appeal' as Sharphill had been.

Councillor S Mallender, as a Member of the Local Development Framework Working Group, thanked officers for their hard work in producing a complex document. She did not, however, support some of the recommendations made by the Working Group. She believed that the Inspector had not taken into account the falling population of Greater Nottingham and West Bridgford when considering the draft Core Strategy. The Green Belt was important as it prevented urban sprawl, however the Council was being made to review and remove land from the Belt. She was pleased to note that the Council was only removing land where it was absolutely necessary for the strategic housing and was not removing land to the east of Lady Bay that was on the flood plain.

In respect of affordable housing she had supported the target for 40% and the need to have different targets to reflect the various needs of the towns and villages in the Borough and regretted the Group's decision to reduce these. Also the targets quoted in the Strategy were maximums and she felt that these should be minimums. Councillor S Mallender welcomed the reduction in the threshold from 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectares to 5 dwellings or 0.2 hectares. However, it should be noted that due to restrictions young people could not find affordable homes within their villages and this was eroding the viability of these areas. She also supported the inclusion of housing for the elderly.

With regard to the proposals for Sharphill, Edwalton Councillor S Mallender did not support any increased land take and felt that the additional houses could be smaller properties within the original boundaries. There was a need to protect the wildlife corridor at this site as well as at the site at Tollerton/North of Gamston.

Councillor Wheeler reminded Members that the Inspector had refused to accept the Council's submission of a Core Strategy in October 2012 stating that there was more housing required. The Council had now proposed a new document which would hopefully be accepted. The Council could not logically choose to do nothing but needed to work with the responses received.

Councillor D Mason spoke in support of the recommendation stating that there were many important policies contained within it. She believed that it was important that the Council followed the recommendations of the Planning Inspector and have a Plan. Members were reminded that over 40% of the Borough was in the Green Belt or 'washed over' and therefore it had been necessary to review. She stated that the Leader had lobbied this Government and the previous Government for a reduction in the number of houses that had to be included in the Strategy with no result.

Councillor Adair agreed with the previous comments in support of the recommendation. He outlined the important policies and stated that these policies governed how the Council would control developments, increase jobs, protect historical land and enhance the local identity until 2028.

Councillor Vennett-Smith spoke in support of his ward and stated that people there objected to the proposals for land South of Clifton, however democratically the decision to include this area had been taken two years ago. Following that decision the Council had then begun a consultation exercise. He objected to the fact that a desktop exercise had found that the visual impact of 3,500 extra houses and an industrial estate was deemed acceptable. He agreed that none of the Borough Councillors were happy to accept the number of houses that were having to be included within the Strategy, however he queried if the Council had sought an opinion on a legal challenge to the Inspector's decision.

Councillor Mrs Stockwood thanked everyone involved in the production of the Local Plan and its policies. She supported the previous comments regarding the importance of the Green Belt and its preservation, however, the Borough did not have large areas of brownfield sites for developments.

Speaking in support of the recommendation Councillor F Mason stated that she was disappointed that the site East of Gamston/North of Tollerton was recognised by the Inspector as a sustainable urban extension as it would now exceed the boundary of the A52 and would form a large development by the very rural area of Bassingfield. She also stated that there were many concerns from the parish councils as some areas had been designated as 'inset' from 'washed over'. However, Members had been assured at the last Local Development Framework Group meeting that this would not allow for development outside of the boundaries and that officers would be working with the parishes to allay any fears. She welcomed the document as it would help

people to live where they wanted and would provide a masterplan to ensure that any developments enhanced the Borough.

Councillor Boote rejected the recommendation, he believed in the principle of a Local Plan but felt that he could not support this one as over 13,000 houses was too great an imposition on the Borough. Also he regretted the reduction in the percentage of affordable housing to be built.

Councillor Jones stated that the Strategy did not offer protection for shopping parades, which he believed were an integral part of West Bridgford. He felt that the sites at South of Clifton and East of Gamston/North of Tollerton should have such parades/centres built into the plans. He also believed that the document did not address highways issues, such as modifications to the A52, or another crossing over the River Trent. He was dismayed that the County Council had made only general comments regarding these issues whilst acknowledging that traffic would be significantly increased. He was also disappointed that previous recommendations regarding highways improvements to the Sharphill site had been reduced and that the shopping area had been moved to the periphery from the centre of the site. He believed that any uplift from the site should be invested into improving infrastructure. Councillor Khan supported these comments.

Councillor Cooper, whilst in support of the recommendation, stated that he was concerned about the number of properties proposed for the East of Gamston/North of Tollerton site and the loss of the pill boxes. He asked that when considering any proposed developments the boundary created by the canal should be taken into account.

Whilst summing up Councillor Clarke stated that if the Council did not agree a Local Plan then the Planning Inspectorate would impose a Plan. He reminded the Members that the consultation on this issue had taken five years and that the Council's duty to co-operate was for the whole of the Greater Nottingham Housing Market Area. He reiterated that the Council needed to act responsibly and have a Local Plan that would give the Council control over development and that the document included a large number of important policies.

On being put to the vote the Recommendation was won.

Recorded Vote

For

Councillors R A Adair, Mrs S P Bailey, J R Bannister, D G Bell, N K Boughton-Smith, N A Brown, B Buschman, 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, M G Hemsley, R Hetherington, I I Korn, N C Lawrence, E J Lungley, A MacInnes, Mrs M M Males, 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 and D G Wheeler (39)

Against

Councillors L J Abbey, Mrs D M Boote, S J Boote, G Davidson, R M Jones, K A Khan, G R Mallender, S E Mallender and T Vennett-Smith (9)

RESOLVED that Council agree:

1. the proposed modifications to the Rushcliffe Core Strategy Publication Draft, as highlighted at **Appendix 1 and Appendix 2**;
2. that authority be delegated to the Executive Manager - Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainability, to make further minor modifications or corrections as are considered necessary to strengthen or to provide clarity to the draft Core Strategy;
3. that the proposed modifications be published for a minimum 6 week period of consultation;
4. that the proposed modifications and any consultation responses be submitted to the Planning Inspector for her consideration in examining the Rushcliffe Core Strategy.

40. **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Councillor Cranswick presented the report which outlined a Council Tax Reduction Scheme that had to be adopted by Council by 31 January 2014. He stated that the proposed scheme would run to the same parameters as the 2013/14 scheme. These parameters limited the maximum support to 91.5% of the Council Tax bill for people of working age who did not have dependent children; but there were no limits for pensioners or for people with dependent children. He informed Members that the changes to the scheme would allow officers to update the scheme in the future following any changes made to the amount of benefits paid, as notified by the Department for Communities and Local Government. He also stated that over 3,000 recipients of Council Tax benefit had been consulted and only 26 responses had been received.

Councillors Davidson, MacInnes and S Mallender supported the proposals. However, it was felt that due to its complexity the document should be considered in line with the Plain English Society's standards. They felt that the scheme was protecting the Authority's vulnerable residents and that it far exceeded other councils' schemes that set a limit of about 80%. It was acknowledged that the scheme was understood both by the staff and the clients.

RESOLVED that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for Rushcliffe Borough Council from 1 April 2014 onwards shall be the Council Tax Reduction Scheme adopted by the Council on 24 January 2013 save for the following provision that:

- a) Uprating to benefit levels be applied in line with figures notified to the Council from time to time by the Department for Communities and Local Government or other relevant bodies; and

- b) When necessary the scheme be updated to reflect amendments to the default Council Tax Reduction Scheme notified to the Council from time to time by the Department for Communities and Local Government, except where such changes would override the key principles of the Scheme agreed by the Council on 24 January 2013.

41. Treasury Management 2013/14 – Prudential Indicator Amendment

Councillor Cranswick reminded Members that the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and associated Prudential Indicators were approved by full Council. He stated that, following the mid-year update report it was highlighted that one of the Indicators required amending. It was acknowledged by the Corporate Governance Group and Cabinet that the Council was experiencing increased difficulty in securing higher interest rates on its investments. It was therefore proposed to increase the upper limit that the Council could invest to 60% from the current 35% in order to allow greater flexibility for officers to invest money over a longer term and gain better rates of interest.

Councillors Davidson, Bannister and G R Mallender indicated that they supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Prudential indicator *“Upper Limits for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure”* is increased to 60% (from 35%).

42. Statement of Licensing Policy

Councillor D Mason presented the Statement of Licensing Policy which was a requirement of the Licensing Act 2003. She stated that the Policy was a statutory document and had to be reviewed every three years, however this would now be extended to every five years. If approved the Policy would come into force on 7 January 2014. The Policy had been consulted upon by statutory and non statutory organisations and then referred to the Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee.

Councillors Davidson, Plant and G R Mallender supported the proposal. It was stated that the main change to the Policy was that anyone, anywhere could now object to a licence. It was acknowledged that this Policy assisted the Council to deal with alcohol related problems and disorder.

RESOLVED that Council approve the revised policy for publication to become effective on the 7 January 2014.

43. Appointment of Independent Person

Councillor Clarke presented a report outlining the proposed appointment of Mr J Baggaley as the Council's Independent Person for standards as required by the Localism Act. Following an interview by the Monitoring Officer and the Senior Solicitor Mr Baggaley's details had been provided to the Group Leaders. On being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed that he should be appointed.

RESOLVED that the Council appoints John Baggaley as its Independent Person for standards under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

44. **To Answer Question Under Standing Order 11(2)**

Question from Councillor S J Boote to Councillor D G Bell

How many complaints were received in the past year related to planning enforcement, and how many of them were upheld? This refers to complaints by residents or Councillors about alleged breaches of planning regulations in developments that were completed, and in some cases where planning permission was never sought.

Councillor Bell replied that there had been 348 received with 143 still to be resolved.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Boote asked if there was a need for the Council to improve its resources to deal with enforcement.

Councillor Bell responded that the Council had two full time officers, which was the norm for an authority of this size. He stated that there were no plans to increase this at present, however if the number of applications should increase this would be reviewed in due course.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

MAYOR