

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COUNCIL
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday 18 July 2012

Time: 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: The Mayor (John Lloyd CC) and Councillors
S Batson MBE DL, L Bell, P Bibby CC, J Brown,
L Chester, B Clark, G Clark, D Cullen, J Gardner,
L Harrington, J Hollywell, C Hurst, PD Kissane, C Latif,
Mrs J Lloyd, M McKay, J Mead, M Notley,
R Parker CC, J Pickersgill, R Raynor, G Snell,
S Speller, P Stuart, S Taylor CC, J Thomas, S Walker,
V Warwick, A Webb and M Yarnold-Forrester.

Also present: Amy Danaher and Ashley Wilson (Youth Council)
Jack Tomlinson, Peter Wheatley and Signe Sutherland
(North Herts College)

Start/End Time: Start Time: 7.00 p.m.
End Time: 9.27 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Burrell,
M Cherney-Craw, M Gardner, M Hearn, R Henry, L Martin-Haugh,
H Tessier and B Underwood.

Councillor S Taylor CC declared a Personal Interest in Item 5 as a
Governor of North Herts College.

2. MINUTES – ANNUAL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2012

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held
on Wednesday 23 May 2012 be approved as a correct record and
signed by the Mayor subject to the following amendment:

**Item 7 – Appointment of Leader and Deputy Leader of the
Opposition** – should read Councillor Margaret Notley and not Maureen
Notley.

3. MINUTES – SPECIAL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2012

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Special Council meeting
held on Wednesday 23 May 2012 be approved as a correct record and
signed by the Mayor

4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

The Mayor welcomed Stevenage resident Mr Graham Bowles, an Olympic torch bearer, to address the meeting. Mr Bowles expressed his delight, humility and pride for being nominated to carry the torch, and said that he was truly overwhelmed by the cheering crowd waving him on despite the heavy rain during the event.

The Mayor thanked both Graham Bowles and Sport Stevenage for their good works in promoting sporting activities in the town.

The Mayor informed the meeting that since taking up his post he had attended 75 official functions which included welcoming the Queen to Stevenage when she opened the new maternity unit at the Lister Hospital.

The Mayor said that he had hosted a number of mini receptions for school children in the Mayor's Parlour which were well received and that he had recently held a larger reception for Council staff who had worked for the authority for over 20 years.

The Mayor expressed his thanks to the Indoor Market Traders for their assistance in organising the Armed Forces day event.

Finally the Mayor noted that the highlight of his civic year so far was meeting the children of Lonsdale School at their Jubilee party.

5. MAIN DEBATE – 'MORE THAN JUST A QUALIFICATION – EDUCATION TRANSFORMED' – NORTH HERTS COLLEGE

Councillor S Taylor CC introduced the debate. She acknowledged the educational opportunities the College offered and welcomed the siting of the Bioscience Catalyst on the Glaxo site as it would play a part in inspiring young people in the future.

The Mayor then invited Jack Tomlinson and Peter Wheatley of North Herts College to make their presentation.

In explaining the College's innovative approach to further education, Jack Tomlinson highlighted the college's shift away from traditional ways of teaching to a new curriculum model. This new model placed more emphasis on student participation. He indicated that students were also being provided opportunities within the college to undertake paid work so as to enhance the skills required for the workplace.

Jack Tomlinson informed the meeting that concerns expressed by businesses that young people lacked initiative, problem solving and communication skills would be addressed by this approach.

A full debate then ensued. The main points raised were as follows:

- A number of Councillors had attended the college in the past and were grateful for the opportunities it had presented them with;
- The new curriculum had been widely publicised and collaboration with local businesses had increased;
- Since the implementation of the new curriculum the number of students progressing to apprenticeships had doubled;
- There had initially been some resistance from lecturers, but this had declined once the benefits of the new approach had been recognised.

In summing up Councillor Taylor CC thanked the presenters and the contributors to the debate. She welcomed the increased collaboration between the college and the business community adding that this would help prepare students for the economic challenges ahead.

The Motion was then put to vote and it was **RESOLVED:**

That this Council applauds and fully supports the work of the North Herts College in creating opportunities for young people in our town by providing the highest level of education, skills and training.

6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC.

None

9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Leader of the Opposition enquired when the Leisure Centre would be fully reopened following the fire outbreak and whether the Council had a policy towards the Luton Airport expansion.

The Strategic Director of Communities indicated that he would provide Members with details of the opening date of the centre in due course.

The Leader advised that the Council would respond to any consultation exercise if and when a planning application regarding the airport was

submitted to Luton Council.

The Leader, on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure, thanked the staff of Stevenage Leisure Limited and the Council for all their efforts in ensuring that, with the exception of the damaged areas, the building reopened within two days.

The Leader highlighted a number of recent key events within the town, the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon, the Queen's visit to open the Diamond Jubilee ward at Lister Hospital, the Olympic Exhibition, opened by local torch bearer Graham Bowles, and the Olympic Torch relay through the town. Finally the Leader took the opportunity to welcome both the British Virgin Islands and the Afghanistan Olympic Teams to Stevenage as they would be utilising the Ridlins Athletics track as their training camp for the Olympics.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration welcomed the opening of both the newly refurbished Glebe shopping centre and the Hyde on Thursday 19 July. He encouraged the public to support local businesses at these centres. He also advised Members that the Planning and Development Committee had granted planning permission for the building of a hotel and restaurant just off the junction 7 of the A1 (M).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources informed Councillors that training would be offered for Members in light of the recent government policy on the localisation of Council Tax Benefits. Members were advised that the Executive would be considering a report about the Council Tax Support scheme on July 31 2012.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport acknowledged the role of local businesses in Stevenage, North Herts College, and the Da Vinci School with the recent launch of the Inward Investment video. He also informed Members of the various signs at the Railway station promoting inward investment to the town.

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Health and Older People informed the meeting that the range of beneficiaries of the local community funding initiatives included the voluntary sector, pre-schools and street and projects to improve the local environmental.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing informed Members of the challenges ahead for the Council as regards the Decent Homes Programme especially in light of central government's directive on building affordable homes using the right to buy receipts.

The Leader welcomed the work undertaken by the Business Technology Centre and thanked businesses in the town for its support. She also welcomed the Bioscience Catalyst on the Glaxo site which

was designed to host the small and micro businesses involved in early stage research and development of new drugs.

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

None

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

None

12. OFFICER REPORT – NEW STANDARDS REGIME FOR MEMBERS

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report regarding the terms of a new code of conduct for Members and other related matters.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Council notes the report to Standards Committee attached as Appendix A and the recommendations of that Committee detailed at paragraph 3.3 that have been incorporated into the following recommendations.
2. That the Council adopts a Code of Conduct in the draft form set out in Appendix C.
3. That in addition to the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests required by the Act the Council determines that Members should register the interests set out in the draft form of Code of Conduct. (Appendix C).
4. That a Standing Order be adopted excluding a Member from a meeting who is prohibited from voting or participating in discussions at the meeting because he or she has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.
5. That the Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations set out in Appendix D to the report be adopted.
6. That Allen Holland be appointed as the Independent Person pursuant to Section 28 of the Act for a period of four years subject to any statutory restriction on the length of term of office or prior termination of the appointment by the Council.
7. That a new Standards Committee be appointed with the composition and terms of reference as set out in Appendix E.

8. That a Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee be appointed at the Committee's first meeting.
9. That the Borough Solicitor be appointed as the Proper Officer for the purposes of Section 33 of the Act.
10. That the Borough Solicitor arrange training on the new Standards Regime for all Members as soon as is convenient.
11. That it be noted that Council may amend the Code and Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations at any time.

13. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE – STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL: MAKING A DIFFERENCE – ANNUAL REPORT 2012

The Council expressed their thanks for the work undertaken by the Officers in producing a good report

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**

1. That the content of the Council's Draft Annual Report 2012 at Appendix A, and arrangements for final publication be agreed.
2. That an amendment to the Constitution; to remove the Annual Report and the Best Value Performance Plan from the Policy and Budget Framework specified items at Article 4 be approved.

14. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE – NEW HOMES BONUS

The recommendation from the Executive was set out in the order of business.

In response to a question it was confirmed that free parking on Saturday applied only to the multi storey car park and Primett road.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the General Fund Revenue Account Contingency sum held by the Executive be increased by £201,000 to maintain this sum at the £400,000 level previously agreed

15. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT – 2011/2012

Council considered a report undertaken by the Development and Scrutiny Committee during the 2011/12 Municipal Year.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the work undertaken by

the Development and Scrutiny Committees during 2011/12 be noted.

16. OFFICER REPORT – URGENT KEY DECISION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE- AWARD OF BMO SUPPLY CHAIN CONTRACTS

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

17. OFFICER REPORT – URGENT KEY DECISION TAKEN BY THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR- RESOURCES –RIGHT TO BUY: RE-INVESTING RECEIPTS IN NEW AFFORDABLE RENTED HOMES

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

18. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – 13 FEBRUARY, 28 MARCH, 13 JUNE 2012

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 13 February, 28 March and 13 June 2012 be noted.

Mayor