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COUNCIL MEETING

10 January 2008 – 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Mayor, Councillor Garrod (in the Chair); Councillors Ames, Barker, Blyth, Burroughs, Castle, B Coleman, M Coleman, Collins, Cook, Cunniffe, Easter, Field, Hacon, Hewitt, Hodds, Holmes, Jermany, Peck, Pettit, Plant, Shrimplin, Smith, Stone, Tate, D Thompson, M Thompson, Wainwright, B Walker, C Walker, Watts, Weymouth and Williamson.

Mr R Packham (Managing Director), Mr C Skinner (Head of Central Services), Mr S Duncan (Head of Financial Services) and Mr R Hodds (Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer).

J Hemming and Dr Blossfeldt (James Paget Hospital) and J Beesley, D Nettleship and P Plattern (Yare Hospice Care) attended for items 1 and 2 below respectively.

(Councillors Hewitt, Tate and Williamson declared a personal interest in the following item).

1. PALLIATIVE CARE EAST HOSPITAL APPEAL

Council considered a presentation from John Hemming (Chairman – James Paget Hospital) and Dr Patrick Blossfeldt (Lead Palliative Centre Consultant) on the Palliative Care East Hospital Appeal for a new cancer centre to be sited at the James Paget Hospital site.

Council was informed that it was estimated that the building costs would be in the region of £1.5m and would be targeted at people who had life threatening illnesses. It was the aim to provide care in the community and not by the provision of hospice beds.

Dr Blossfeldt reported that Palliative Care supports patients and families whose lives are affected by incurable illness such as cancer or motor neurone disease. A holistic approach to care helps patients and families to come to terms with a situation and to live out the time that remains as fully as possible. Council was informed that Palliative Care is not just about effective pain management and symptom relief but also offers emotional, spiritual and practical support.

Dr Blossfeldt reported that the Palliative Care East Centre, to be built in the grounds of the James Paget University Hospital, would provide a much needed care base for patients and their families in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney area. With professionals and volunteers working under the same roof, it would bring together first class clinical care, complimentary therapies, physiological and spiritual support, and practical advice on social care and financial matters. Council was also informed that it would be likely to cost in the region of

£100,000 per annum to run the centre and this would be funded either by the PCT or through public donations.

The Mayor thanked the representatives for their presentation on this matter.

2. YARE HOSPICE CARE

Council considered a presentation from Jennifer Beesley in respect of the Yare Hospice Care. Ms Beesley reported on the aim to provide day care facilities and on the proposal to provide a ten bed hospice care unit. Council was informed that each bedroom would be 20m² and would each have its own garden and accommodation space for relatives. It would be likely to cost in the region of £2.5m to build. Council was informed that funding would be sought from the Strategic Health Authority, Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund, County and District Councils and also from national charitable bodies. Revenue costs would be split between the PCT and other funding bodies.

Council also considered a plan of the proposed layout of the hospice unit and the representatives from the Yare Hospice Care confirmed that their proposals were compatible with those proposed by Palliative Care East. Council was informed that discussions were still progressing with regard to the identification of a site for the Hospice Care Unit. In response to a question with regard to pledges of money received, Ms Beesley reported that a number of private donations had already been received. The representatives confirmed that a business plan for the project would be completed by the end of February 2008. The timescale for building the unit was anticipated to be 2010. The representatives confirmed that the unit would be for adult use only.

The Mayor thanked the representatives from Yare Hospice Care for their presentation on this matter.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the 1 and 28 November 2007 were confirmed.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Council was advised that no questions had been received.

5. REPORTS TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION

(a) Appointments to Outside Bodies 2007/08

Proposer: Councillor B Coleman

Seconder: Councillor Stone

That the following appointments be agreed:-

- Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust – Councillor Cook to replace former Councillor Howard.
- James Paget Healthcare NHS Trust (Governors Council) – Councillor Watts to replace former Councillor Howard (three years from 1 April 2006).

- Great Yarmouth/Waveney Sub-Regional Officer/Member Working Group – Councillors Plant and Peck.
- Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership – Councillor Jeal.

CARRIED

6. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

(a) Council – 1 and 28 November 2007

The Mayor presented the minutes of the Council meetings held on the 1 and 28 November 2007.

With regard to item 7 (Motions on Notice), Councillor B Walker stated that the Labour Group had never treated anybody with contempt whilst his Group were in Office during the period 1991 to 2000.

With regard to item 1 (Local Government Re-organisation), the Shadow Leader referred to the Ministers recent decision with regard to unitary status issues for Suffolk and the fact that it had been indicated that the possible linkage of Great Yarmouth with Waveney was an option that could be investigated. He reported that there was much support for the “Yartoft” option from business, health, education and local residents in the Borough. He asked that consideration be given to a meeting of the Local Government Re-organisation Working Group being convened as soon as possible.

The Leader reported that the Working Group would not meet until the Terms of Reference/Guidance had been received from the Government. The Leader also questioned whether there was public support for the Yartoft options and he reported on the need for further discussions about all possible alternatives in respect of unitary issues. He commented that once the Terms of Reference were known there would be more significant detailed discussions on this issue. He reminded Council that at their meeting on 28 November it had been agreed that at present the Borough Council would support a free unitary model. He also confirmed that no more Officer time was being spent on this matter until guidance had been received from the Government.

Councillor Castle commented that there was a need to look at both options as there was an affinity of interest between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. The Deputy Leader reported that the funds allocated to this issue, as agreed by Council, would only be sufficient to look at the agreed option as it was the Group’s view that the Yartoft option was not in the public’s interest.

(b) Cabinet – 28 November and 19 December 2007

The Leader presented the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 28 November and 19 December 2007.

With regard to item 4 (2007/08 Budget Monitoring), Council agreed to amend the reference of September to October in the minutes. Councillor Hacon also asked the question as to whether the budget report was accurate, and the Cabinet Member (Resources) reported that detailed work was in progress with regard to budget monitoring, and that the budget monitoring report was accurate.

(c) **Scrutiny Committee – 26 November 2007**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 November 2007.

(d) **Audit and Risk Committee – 12 November and 17 December 2007**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meetings held on the 12 November and 17 December 2007.

With regard to item 4 (2006/07 Annual Governance Report), Councillor B Walker referred to the contents of this report and in particular, to the reference made of the Council's inability to prepare proper accounts. Councillor Walker also referred to issues relating to the possible issue of a "Public Interest" Report and also on the Disclaimer Audit Report. Councillor Walker also pointed out that Cabinet had failed to implement audit commission recommendations over a number of years. Cabinet had also ignored recommendations from both the Scrutiny and Audit and Risk Committee indicating that the Finance Department should be strengthened as a matter of urgency. Councillor Walker acknowledged that the new structure had now been put in place, which he welcomed but stated that this needed to be closely monitored. In conclusion, Councillor Walker requested that both the Leader and the Cabinet Member (Resources) should resign from their positions on the Cabinet.

Councillor Hacon commented that it appeared that the Council always receives a poor audit letter and that it cannot at this stage prove financial probity. There was a need to get correct resources in place. Councillor Ames commented that, in his opinion, the Ruling Group had acted in a proper manner with regard to the accounting procedures.

In response to the comments, the Leader highlighted the issues of public satisfaction in connection with a number of the Borough Council's services. He confirmed that Cabinet had not ignored the Audit Commissions' recommendations but as yet, the Ruling Group had not been able to remedy all of the recommendations but were working very hard to achieve this and that this matter was regarded as a top priority. He also referred to the introduction of the Financial Management System last year and also reminded Council that professional expertise had already been brought in for the Finance Department. In response to a comment regarding the Resources' Advisory Group, the Leader reported that this had not met recently due to constraints within the Finance Department.

Proposer: Councillor B Coleman

Seconder: Councillor Stone

That the minutes of Council of the 1 and 28 November 2007, Cabinet of the 28 November and 19 December 2007, Scrutiny Committee of the 26 November 2007 and Audit and Risk Committee of the 12 November and 17 December 2007 be received.

CARRIED

7. REPORT OF LEADER ON URGENT KEY DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING WHICH WERE NOT IN THE FORWARD PLAN

Council was advised that there were no urgent key decisions to be reported.

8. MAYOR 2008/09

Council was recommended to approve the appointment of Councillor Terrence Robert Easter as Mayor of the Borough of Great Yarmouth for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

Proposer: Councillor Wainwright

Seconder: Councillor B Coleman

That approval be given to the appointment of Councillor Terrence Robert Easter as Mayor of the Borough of Great Yarmouth for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

CARRIED

9. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm.