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COUNCIL MEETING

28 July 2005 – 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

The Mayor, Councillor Jermany (in the Chair); Councillors Ames, Barker, Blyth, Castle, Cook, Cosaitis, Easter, Giles, Hacon, Hodds, Howard, Hudson, Jeal, Lawley, Linden, Page, Peck, Plant, Robinson, Shrimplin, Smith, Stone, Tate, Taylor, D Thompson, M Thompson, Wainwright, B Walker, C Walker, Watts and Williamson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coleman and Collins.

Mr R Packham (Chief Executive Officer), Mr M Barrow (Corporate Director (Environment and Economy)), Mr B Sharma (Corporate Director (Resources)), Mr B Bergin (Corporate Director (Social Policy)), Ms N Swan (Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mr R Hodds (Member Services Manager).

1. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed Councillor D Thompson to the meeting following his recent illness. The Mayor also referred to the recent road accident of Councillor and Mrs Collins and Members agreed to send their best wishes to them for a speedy recovery.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the 30 June 2005 were confirmed.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members were advised that no questions had been raised by a member of the public.

4. REPORTS TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION

(a) Statement of Accounts 2004/05

Council gave consideration to the Statement of Accounts for 2004/05.

Proposer: Councillor Smith

Seconder: Councillor Stone

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Council received, for information, the following minutes:-

- (a) **Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Policy Development Committee, Regulatory Committees, The Executive and Council**
 - (i) Council of 30 June 2005
 - (ii) Development Control Committee of the 14 July 2005
 - (iii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 18 July 2005
 - (iv) The Executive of the 20 July 2005
 - (v) Licensing Committee of the 21 July 2005
 - (vi) Housing Appeals Committee of the 25 July 2005

During discussion of the above minutes the following issue was discussed:-

- **Homelessness/Housing Benefit Review**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Council of the progress being made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of their review into Homelessness/Housing Benefit. In particular he referred to the recommendations to be considered by the Executive in the near future.

- (b) **Notes of Meetings of Cabinet Members**

Council received, for information, the notes of the following meetings:-

- (i) 6 July 2005
- (ii) 19 July 2005

6. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

In accordance with paragraph 11.1 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Constitution, Members were asked to consider the following motion:-

“That the Council resolve to give priority to ensuring an adequate supply of affordable/social housing in the Borough to meet the acknowledged needs of local people and to assist with the future development of the local economy.

The Motion urges the Council’s Cabinet/Executive as a matter of urgency to identify land for development in conjunction with Housing Associations, County Council, government and charitable agencies with a view to getting the largest number of high standard affordable properties for purchase, rental or part rent/part buy by local people and their families – including via “key worker” initiatives.

The Motion requests the Cabinet/Executive to investigate the potential for affordable housing on the old allotment site (off Church Road, Gorleston)”.

In considering this item, Council gave consideration to a tabled briefing note from the Head of Housing Needs and Welfare Services with regard to the development of affordable housing throughout the Borough.

Proposer: Councillor M Thompson

Seconder: Councillor Blyth

That the above motion be approved subject to the deletion of the request to investigate the potential for affordable housing on the old allotment site off Church Road, Gorleston, and subject to the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Party comprising Councillors Lawley, Linden and M Thompson and relevant Officers to investigate the issue of the development of affordable housing throughout the Borough with a view to reporting back to the Executive in November 2005.

CARRIED

7. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

In accordance with paragraphs 10.2 and 10.4 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Constitution, the following questions from Councillor Hudson were asked of the Executive Member (Property Development and Regeneration):-

Re: Former Councillor Russell

- (a) Who notified the Police about the forged letter that Jonathan Russell was accused of using?

The Executive Member reported that the Planning Department first became aware of the forged letter and they referred it to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer, after consulting with the Head of Member and Legal Services, notified the Police.

- (b) Who made the decision to call the Police?

The Executive Member reported that the Chief Executive Officer had made the decision.

- (c) Who was consulted before the final decision to refer the matter to the Police?

The Executive Member reported that the Head of Member and Legal Services had been consulted.

- (d) Whose advice was received to enable the decision in question (b) above to be made?

The Executive Member reported that the concern of the Planning Department had been made initially and then consequently the Head of Member and Legal Services.

- (e) How important was the forged letter?

The Executive Member reported that the forged letter purported to contain advice from the Planning Department on the status of a non-existent planning application and as such it was a serious matter that required investigation.

- (f) What is the Council going to do to find the instigator of the forged letter?

The Executive Member reported that it is not the Council's job to find the instigator of the forged letter. The matter was handed over to the Police who undertook the investigation and the Crown Prosecution Service decided on what charge to bring.

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, Councillor Hudson asked the following supplementary question:-

What action will the Council take in respect of the issues surrounding the alleged forged letter being placed in former Councillor Russell's pigeonhole or whether the letter was in fact sent to him by post?

The Executive Member reported that this was a matter for the Police to investigate if necessary.

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

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

9. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm.