

COUNCIL

2 April 2008

Present:- The Worshipful the Mayor

(Councillor D Clarke) in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

Astle, Mrs Margaret, CC	MacMillan, John
Becket, David William	Maskery, Philip
Beech, Mrs Ann Elizabeth	Matthews, Ian John
Bishop, Mrs Elizabeth Ellen	Maxfield, Mrs Mary Cynthia
Blake, Mrs Elaine Elizabeth	Morris, Mrs Helen Mary
Burgess, Mrs Silvia	Myatt, Mrs Freda Dorothea
Burnett, Mrs Gillian	Olszewski, Mark Joseph, JP
Butler, Mrs Sylvia Teresa	Reddish, Miss Marion Lynne
Chrzanowski, Edmund	Shenton, Mrs Elizabeth Alice Ruth
Cooley, Andrew Robin	Simpson, Mrs Sandra Jean
Cooper, Miss Julie Margaret	Simpson, William Thomas
Cooper, John	Slater, Raymond André
Cornes, Mrs Catherine Dylis, JP	Sweeney, Stephen John McLean
Daniels, David	Tagg, Simon John CC
Dolman, Michael John	Tatton, John Arthur
Evans, John Stanley	Taylor, Mrs Tracy Ann Belinda
Finnemore, Victor Clifford	Tomkins, Brian Ronald
Foy, Michael	Walklate, Miss June
Gorton, Richard Lloyd, CC	Wilkes, Ian Frank
Heames, Mrs Ann	Williams, Mrs Gillian
Huckfield, Derrick	Williams, John

780. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Bowyer, Mrs Braithwaite, Mrs Hailstones, Hailstones, Mrs Hambleton, Hambleton, Holland, Howells, Jones, Mrs Moss, Mrs Naylor, Mrs Salt, Mrs Speed, Studd and Whieldon.

781. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2008 be approved as a correct record.

782. **LOCAL AUTHORITY BUSINESS GROWTH INITIATIVE (LABGI)**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the terms and conditions of the repayments to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in respect of the overpayment by the DCLG of the Local Authorities Business Growth Initiative grant to the Council.

The terms and conditions agreed with the DCLG were set out in their letter to the Council dated 7 March 2008 which had been circulated to Members before the meeting.

The Council Leader and other Members praised the work of those Council Officers involved in the negotiations with the DCLG which had led to what was considered to be a fair settlement of this matter.

Resolved:- (a) That the repayment terms as set out in the DCLG's letter dated 7 March 2008 be agreed.

(b) That the repayment of £300,000 in April 2009 and April 2010 be funded via the Contingency Reserve.

783. **MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2008/09**

A report was submitted requesting Members to consider what amounts should be paid in respect of Members Allowances for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

Approval was also sought to the proposed list of approved duties.

Councillor Cooley, seconded by Councillor Tagg, welcomed the officers recommendations set out in the report and submitted a number of additional recommendations for consideration.

During the discussion on this matter Members also requested that consideration be given to all costs and expenses incurred by them in performing their duties as a Councillor.

Resolved:- (a) That the Council continues to pay the maximum nationally agreed rates for travelling and subsistence.

(b) That the list of approved duties be approved for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

(c) (i) That the Members Basic Allowance be increased by 2.5%, consistent with the rate of inflation (Consumer Price Index) and the increase in the rate of Council Tax.

(ii) That Special Responsibility Allowances for the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs and Vice-Chairs are frozen and paid at the present rate until the Review Panel recommendations have been considered by Council and any changes agreed.

(iii) That the allocation of Special Responsibility Allowances be considered by the Review Panel in the light of recent changes in the governance of the Council, that the Panel interviews post-holders and officers to establish levels of responsibility and workload and makes new recommendations to ensure that all Members carrying special responsibilities are appropriately included in the Scheme, and that a report with these recommendations be brought to full Council before the end of September 2008.

(iv) That the total funding available for Special Responsibility Allowances be limited to the present total plus 2.5% in line with inflation and the rise in Council Tax, and that the Review Panel makes its recommendations within that limit.

(v) That the rules relating to Minority Party Leaders and Carer's Allowance remain unchanged.

(vi) That the list of duties for which expenses may be paid be reviewed by the appropriate Scrutiny and Overview Committee on an annual basis, with recommendations being made to Council.

784. **CONFIRMATION OF MEETINGS**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the following meeting be adopted:

Public Protection Committee – 18 February 2008.

785. **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION
HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITE - LEYCETT**

Consideration was given to an emergency communication submitted by Councillor Becket, and seconded by Councillor Tagg, expressing serious concerns over a decision taken by Staffordshire County Council to close the Household Waste Site at Leycett for two days a week.

Of particular concern was the fact that the decision had been taken without any prior consultation or written notification and that the reduced opening times would cause difficulties for those wishing to use the facility.

Concern was also expressed that the facilities for the disposal of oil and rubble at the Leycett site had also been removed to an alternative site at Biddulph.

It was also considered likely that the reduced opening times at Leycett would lead to fly-tipping that would have a resource implication on the Borough Council.

Resolved:- (a) That this Council condemns the County Council for its lack of consultation on the decision taken to close the Household Waste Site at Leycett on two days each week.

(b) That the County Council be advised that decisions taken in the above matter are not in the spirit of the enhanced two-tier working arrangements which they have committed to under the Local Area Agreement.

Councillors Mrs Beech and Wilkes declared their prejudicial interests in the following matter and left the meeting during the debate. (Post Office employees).

786. **POST OFFICE CLOSURES
MOTION SUBMITTED BY A MEMBER**

Consideration was given to a motion submitted by Councillor Miss Reddish, seconded by Councillor Tagg, concerning the proposed closure of a number of Post Offices in the Borough.

Following a discussion, the following amended motion was voted on and agreed:

“This Council strongly objects to the proposed closure of Post Offices across the Borough and the Sorting Office at Leek Road, Stoke and asks the Post Office executive team to reconsider its decision to close 5 branches in Newcastle.

The Council feel that the closure of these Post Offices will have a detrimental impact on local community life and will cause loss of employment and hardship to the more vulnerable people in our community.”

It was also resolved that:

- (a) A copy of the Council's letter to the Post Office making representations about the proposed closures be forwarded to all local MPs and the appropriate Government Minister.
- (b) This matter be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel for consideration with a view to a more detailed response being made to the Post Office on the proposed closures by the appropriate date in June 2008.

787. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY A MEMBER – STANDING ORDER 21(2)

Consideration was given to a written response prepared by the officers to a question submitted by Councillor Mrs Butler in respect of the provision for out of hours call-outs in the Borough.

Resolved:- That the officers response be received.

788. RETIRING COUNCILLORS

The Mayor announced that Councillors Chrzanowski, Finnemore, Howells, Tatton and Mrs Speed would not be seeking re-election at the forthcoming elections.

Members paid tribute to the many years service which they had given.

789. ALAN DOIG – CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Members referred to the recent retirement of Alan Doig as the Chief Fire Officer of Staffordshire and Fire Rescue Service and paid tribute to his long and dedicated service.

Resolved:- That a letter be sent to Mr Doig wishing him a long and happy retirement.

**D CLARKE
Chair**