

# SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 14 June 2007 in the Sandbach Town Council Offices, Sandbach Literary Institution Building, Hightown.**

## **PRESENT**

Councillor: W W Scragg, Chairman  
Councillors: Mrs P M Minshull, Vice-Chairman  
Mrs D E Alcock  
Ms D Darnes  
Mrs G M Merry  
D K Atkin  
G W Bell  
S A M Corcoran  
P J Darnes  
W R Goodall  
K E Haines  
S B Holland  
B E Moran  
L Morris  
D Robinson  
M R Sherman  
A J Wood

Also present was 1 member of the press.

Apologies were received from County Councillor R Giltrap.

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The Opening Prayer was read by the Vice-chairman.

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor: R W Sutton

## **2. THE CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

He informed members that Cllr Sutton had been kept in hospital due to an illness that was not related to his previous hospitalisation.

The Chairman thanked all those who had sent good wishes for his recent eye operation. His vision was much improved.

He had attended a most enjoyable concert by Sandbach Voices.

He had also attended the more formal Sandbach Partnership Annual General Meeting.

In the absence of members of the public there was no question time.

## **3. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2007/8.**

It was stated that the Planning Meetings always took place 5 days before the Borough Planning Meeting which meant that the Town Council's comments did not appear on the planning officers' reports. It was said that the Town Council's comments were required 10 to 14 days before the Borough's meeting.

It was also said that the gap between the first and second quarter's Finance and Personnel Meetings was too great. The Finance Chairman explained the reason for the quarterly meetings and said that he was happy with the proposed dates.

**RESOLVED:** that the calendar is maintained for the immediate future but that the possibility of bringing the Planning dates forward by two weeks is investigated.

**RESOLVED:** that an extra Finance and Personnel Meeting is inserted between the first and second quarter's Finance and Personnel Meetings.

#### 4. **SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL VISION.**

The Chairman of the Quality and Project Committee emphasised the need for the vision document. If we are to be a Quality Council we must have a sense of direction. In addition we should also have a Town Plan for Sandbach. He had been assured that despite the existence of the Market Town "health check" this could be done. The vision document provides a strategic plan. If the Council accepts it there will be a lot of work to be done and there will be a requirement for members to commit to putting in the time required.

It was said that it will be necessary to prepare a "Medium Term Financial Strategy" covering the next three years in which the cost of the various items in the vision will be estimated.

Concern was expressed that the vision was restricted to the Sandbach Town Centre. It should be enlarged to include the outskirts and include projects such as that promoted by the Wheelock Community Association. The vision should be looked upon as a living document and the current version was an excellent start.

**RESOLVED:** that the Sandbach Vision document with the proposed actions for implementation is approved by Sandbach Town Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the Sandbach Vision document be made available for public consultation.

#### 5. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR).**

The Sandbach Vision document formed the basis on which the LGR working group considered the implication of the various proposals. They had dismissed the two unitary proposals as impractical. It was pointed out that the Council could decide not to respond.

There was doubt as to whether there would be any savings since the history of local government reform showed that the costs were always underestimated. Members should go for the option that was the least bad. It was thought that the Borough Council's efforts for a Judicial Review would not influence the government. If the County unitary was chosen it would be important for us to fight for increased powers for the local committees.

The proposed response was criticised as sitting on the fence and the suggestion made that the statements should be stronger.

There was support for both the County unitary proposal and for the improved two tier working that retained the Borough Councils. Arguments for the Unitary proposal included the statements that people identified better with Cheshire

than they did with Congleton and that the majority of the country had unitary local government without any obvious opposition.

The improved two tier working proposal was likely to be the cheapest option.

It was agreed that the response would accept either the Cheshire proposal or an improved existing system and therefore no changes would be made to the working group's draft response.

**RESOLVED:** that the report and the consultation response document prepared by the LGR working Group be approved.

**RESOLVED:** that the response be submitted to the Government before the 22nd June deadline.

**6. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

The incorrect date for the next meeting was printed on the agenda.

**RESOLVED:** that the next meeting of the Sandbach Town Council be held on Thursday 26 July 2007 at 7.15 pm at the Sandbach Town Council Offices in the Sandbach Literary Institution building.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm.

W W Scragg  
Chairman

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