

MINUTES OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

At a Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Slough held at the Town Hall, Slough on Tuesday, 3rd February, 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:- The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Zarait) in the chair; Councillors Anderson, Bains, Bal, Basharat, P Choudhry, Coad, S Chaudhry, Cryer, Dale-Gough, Davis, A S Dhaliwal, S K Dhaliwal, Dhillon, Dodds, Finn, Grewal, Haines, Hewitt, Jenkins, MacIsaac, Mann, Matloob, Munkley, O'Connor, Pabbi, Plimmer, Pantelic, Qureshi, Rasib, Shine, Small, Stokes, Swindlehurst and Walsh.

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Buchanan, Chohan, Latif Khan, Parmar and Wright.

PART I

PRAYERS

At the request of the Mayor his Chaplain the Reverend Derek West said Prayers.

53. One Minute Silence

The Council stood for one minute's silence in memory of the people recently killed in Palestine.

54. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bal declared a personal interest as a member of his family worked for the Borough Council.

55. Minutes

The minutes of the proceedings of the Council at its meeting held on 16th December, 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

56. Matters Arising on the Minutes

Councillor Mann referred to minute 40 – Eid Lunch – 17th December, 2008 and expressed his concern that he had, to date, not received the written response that had been promised with regard to this event. Councillor Mann subsequently withdrew from the meeting.

57. Mayor's Communications

None.

58. Questions from Electors under Procedure Rule 9

None.

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59. Questions from Members re the Thames Valley Police Authority under Procedure Rule 10

None.

60. Recommendations of the Licensing Committee of 21st January, 2009 re Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places

It was moved by Councillor Matloob,
Seconded by Councillor Davis,

“That the recommendations of the Licensing Committee as set out in the report be approved and adopted.”

The recommendations were put and carried.

Resolved - That the Council:-

- (a) Being satisfied that public nuisance or annoyance to members of the public, or a section of the public, and disorder has been associated with public drinking in the areas defined;
- (b) Being satisfied that the problem will continue unless Orders are made;
- (c) Having considered the consultation responses received;

resolves to make Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places Orders under Sections 12 to 16 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (as amended) in respect of the areas detailed in the plans and descriptions attached to this report as follows:-

- 1. Town Centre.
- 2. Chalvey.
- 3. Baylis.
- 4. Colnbrook.
- 5. Langley 1.
- 6. Langley 2.
- 7. Langley 3.
- 8. Britwell.
- 9. Farnham Road.
- 10. Wexham Central.
- 11. Haymill.
- 12. Cippenham Green and Cippenham Meadows.

61. Motions

Motion A - Electoral Registration

It was moved by Councillor Dale-Gough,
Seconded by Councillor Cryer,

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“Since the Government brought in postal voting freely on demand, there has been electoral fraud perpetrated in many parts of the country by some members of all the major political parties, as we know in Slough.

We have therefore investigated what actions have been taken in other parts of the country where fraud has been experienced, to attempt to eradicate this problem, including discussions with the Slough Electoral Registration Officer.

We call upon The Council to resolve that -

‘In conducting the 2009 Annual Canvass:-

- (a) The Electoral Registration Officer issues blank Voter Registration Forms to each household.
- (b) A new Register of Electors is compiled and published from the forms submitted.
- (c) That the Electoral Registration Officer be requested not carry forward names where there has been no response from a household.
- (d) That any extra resources required by the Electoral Registration Department are allocated. (This may be the cost of seconding staff from other departments).’

This should ensure that those persons who no longer live in Slough are removed from the Electoral Register and only current eligible persons are included on the Electoral Roll.

It is accepted that this motion will have resource implications for Electoral Services.”

At the request of the Mayor, the Council’s Returning Officer summarised the existing electoral legislation and the measures available to the Council to combat fraud.

An amendment to be moved by Councillor Swindlehurst was tabled. The Mayor ruled that the amendment was not in order under the Council’s procedure rules as it was, in his view, effectively a new motion. Councillor Swindlehurst withdrew the proposed amendment.

The motion was put and lost by 15 votes to 19 votes with 1 abstention.

Resolved - That the motion be rejected.

Motion B – Electoral Registration and Elections Training

It was moved by Councillor Bains,
Seconded by Councillor Swindlehurst,

“This Council notes that:

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- The coming month sees the start of Criminal Court proceedings against a group of individuals already found by an Election Court to have been part of an organised postal vote fraud and personation offences in the Slough Local Elections 2007.
- The voting fraud scandal in Central Ward has undermined local residents' confidence in the electoral process and in the security of postal voting, and has done untold reputational damage to our town.
- Concerns remain as to the adequacy of personal identifier checks and the overall security of the postal vote system nationally.
- The 2009 elections will be the first elections not already under way since the publication of the Slough Election Court judgement and it is important that we work to ensure electors can have confidence that the electoral practices of local political groups and parties are proper, and that the results of elections in this town have integrity and reflect the fair and free votes of genuine electors taking part in the polls.

As a result this Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Elections Office of Slough Borough Council to conduct a review of the Council's elections administration arrangements and processes, to ensure the Council is making full use of the further powers granted in the 2006 Elections Administration Act – particularly the increased signature and identity checking powers.
- Review and enhance the training and briefing offered to prospective candidates, political parties, their volunteers and election agents - to ensure the relevant individuals are fully aware of the law and good/bad practice in the conduct of their campaigns, and to ensure that this training takes place earlier in the year, before campaigning gets under way, as well as being covered in the Council's elections briefing at the start of the nomination process."

In seconding the motion Councillor Swindlehurst proposed, and it was accepted by the mover of the motion, that the following amendment be incorporated:-

In the first bullet point of the resolution insert 'reporting within four months' after "processes" in the third line and at the end of the first bullet point of the resolution add "and make recommendations to Group Leaders for action". The amended motion was put and carried by 22 votes to 5 votes with 7 abstentions.

Resolved - This Council notes that:-

- The coming month sees the start of Criminal Court proceedings against a group of individuals already found by an Election Court to have been part of an organised postal vote fraud and personation offences in the Slough Local Elections 2007.
- The voting fraud scandal in Central Ward has undermined local residents' confidence in the electoral process and in the security of postal voting, and has done untold reputational damage to our town.

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- Concerns remain as to the adequacy of personal identifier checks and the overall security of the postal vote system nationally.
- The 2009 elections will be the first elections not already under way since the publication of the Slough Election Court judgement and it is important that we work to ensure electors can have confidence that the electoral practices of local political groups and parties are proper, and that the results of elections in this town have integrity and reflect the fair and free votes of genuine electors taking part in the polls.

As a result this Council resolves to:-

- Instruct the Elections Office of Slough Borough Council to conduct a review of the Council's elections administration arrangements and processes reporting within four months, to ensure the Council is making full use of the further powers granted in the 2006 Elections Administration Act – particularly the increased signature and identity checking powers and make recommendations to Group Leaders for action.
- Review and enhance the training and briefing offered to prospective candidates, political parties, their volunteers and election agents - to ensure the relevant individuals are fully aware of the law and good/bad practice in the conduct of their campaigns, and to ensure that this training takes place earlier in the year, before campaigning gets under way, as well as being covered in the Council's elections briefing at the start of the nomination process.

Motion C – Fair Funding Campaign

It was moved by Councillor Plimmer,
Seconded by Councillor Munkley,

“In light of the current fiscal challenges, due to the recession and the ongoing issue of unfair funding, this Council resolves to:-

- (1) Restart the media campaign to achieve Fair Funding for the people of Slough as the current situation is untenable.
- (2) Ask Cabinet to examine past Labour motions in the last four years, which are not currently implemented if they are fiscally viable in light of the current fiscal situation of the Council.”

It was moved as an amendment by Councillor Anderson,
Seconded by Councillor Swindlehurst,

That the motion be amended to read:-

“In light of the current financial challenges due to the recession and the ongoing issue of underfunding this Council resolves to

~~Restart the media campaign to achieve Fair Funding for the people of Slough as the current situation is untenable.~~

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- (1) Continue the focussed and professional campaign to ministers and the UK Statistics Authority to ensure that we achieve Fair Funding for Slough in the future.
- (2) Ask Cabinet to examine past Labour Motions in the last four years ~~(which are not currently implemented)~~ where they formed part of the Manifesto and see if they are viable in light of the current financial situation.

The amendment was put and carried by 19 votes to 13 votes with 2 abstentions.

The motion, as amended, was put and carried by 20 votes to 14 votes with no abstentions.

Resolved - In light of the current financial challenges, due to the recession and the ongoing issue of underfunding this Council resolves to:-

1. Continue the focussed and professional campaign to Ministers and the UK Statistics Authority to ensure that we achieve fair funding for Slough in the future.
2. Ask Cabinet to examine past Labour motions in the last four years where they formed part of the Manifesto and see if they are viable in light of the current financial situation.

62. Questions from Members under Procedure Rule 10

Questions from Members together with the responses received from relevant Chairs and Commissioners were tabled.

63. Minutes of the Cabinet and Committees

The minutes of the meetings of Cabinet and Committees held since the last ordinary meeting of the Council were received as follows:-

Cabinet of 27th November, 2008.

Cabinet of 4th December, 2008.

Planning Committee of 22nd December, 2008.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 15th January, 2009.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 7.00 p.m. and closed at 9.05 p.m.)