DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

27TH APRIL, 2009

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the COUNCIL was held at the MANSION HOUSE, DONCASTER, on MONDAY, 27TH APRIL, 2009, at 9.00 a.m.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Paul Coddington  
Vice-Chair - Councillor Barbara Hoyle  
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Stuart Exelby


APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mayor Martin Winter, Councillors Elsie Butler, Bob Ford, Cliff Hampson, Nigel Hodges, Sandra Holland, Eva Hughes, Barry Johnson, J.P., Chris Mills, Cynthia Ransome, Craig Sahman and Norah Troops.

138. ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, the Council agreed to the variation of the order of business by considering agenda item 4 (Appointment of a Monitoring Officer to the Council), prior to agenda item 3.

139. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

No declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest were made at the meeting.

140. APPOINTMENT OF A MONITORING OFFICER TO THE COUNCIL

The Council considered a report, which sought the appointment of the Monitoring Officer, following the departure of Paul Evans.
Information on the role of the Monitoring Officer was submitted together with a proposal that Robin Hooper, the Interim Director of Resources, be appointed to the position.

RESOLVED that Robin Hooper, be appointed on an interim basis, as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from the 27th April, 2009.

141. TO CONSIDER A REQUISITION, WRITTEN NOTICE OF WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN BY COUNCILLORS JOE BLACKHAM, ROS JONES, GARTH OXBY, JOHN McHALE AND EDWIN SIMPSON, IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 3.1.

Prior to consideration of this item, the Chair, Councillor Paul Coddington, stated that Members should have received a letter over the weekend from the Acting Director, Legal and Democratic Services, containing legal advice in relation to the debate of the Motion and asked Members to have regard to that advice during the course of the debate.

The Chair also reminded Members to consider the impact of inappropriate conduct and comments in the Council Chamber and, asked Members to refrain from personal attacks and, the use of offensive expressions in reference to other Members, Officers or anyone else.

The Chair outlined that this meeting had been called at the request of Councillors Joe Blackham, Ros Jones, Garth Oxby, John McHale and Edwin Simpson, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.1, to consider the following Motion:-

“This Council deplores the total absence of any meaningful Political and Managerial Leadership within Doncaster’s Children’s Services following the reports from Mark Eales in January, 2005 and Bron Sanders in March, 2007. The result of which was the direct intervention of Government into Children’s Services within Doncaster. The principle reasons given for this intervention are as follows:-

- The lack of a strong and settled management team.
- Ineffective political leadership.
- Weak local partnerships.

The Council requires the Elected Mayor to account for this situation.”

The Chair opened the debate by inviting Councillor Joe Blackham, to introduce the Motion which was Seconded by Councillor John McHale.

An amendment to the Motion was Moved by Councillor Patrick Wilson and Seconded by Councillor Martin Williams, in the following terms:-

Delete ‘The Council requires the Elected Mayor to account for this situation’ and insert:-

‘Council resolves therefore to
(i) Learn from its past errors by recognising that the duty of being a Corporate Parent is one that lies with every Councillor irrespective of Political background and furthermore asks that all Councillors become involved in the overseeing and support of the service that carries out its safeguarding functions.

(ii) Welcome the support being provided by the local government family including the IDeA and the LGA to both Officers and Members within Doncaster and asks the authority to continue with this support for the foreseeable future.

(iii) Establish a Special Support Committee composed of the leader of each Party Group on Doncaster Council, the Children’s Services Portfolio Holder, the Mayor of Doncaster (to be elected in June) to advise and support work with the Interim Director of Children’s Services consistent with the Corporate Plan, the Children and Young People’s Plan and the agreed budget of the Council to improve the quality of the services provided to young people within the Borough.”

A second amendment was Moved by Councillor Paul Bissett and Seconded by Councillor Kevin Abell, for the Motion to read in the following terms:-

“This Council deplores the total absence of any meaningful Managerial leadership and Political leadership from Labour Cabinet Members and the then Labour Mayor within Children’s Services, this following the reports from Mark Eales in January, 2005 and Bron Sanders in March, 2007. The result of which has been the direct intervention of Government into Children’s Services within Doncaster.

The principle reasons given for this intervention are as follows:-

- The lack of a strong and settled management team.
- Ineffective political leadership from Labour Cabinet Members and Labour Mayor.
- Weak local partnerships.

The Council requires the Cabinet at that time and the Elected Mayor to account for this situation.”

142. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

At this point, the Chair proposed that the meeting stand adjourned for a period of 20 minutes, to allow all Members to consider the two amendments proposed.

143. RESUMPTION OF MEETING

The meeting reconvened at 9.50 a.m.

The Chair then afforded all Members in the Chamber, the opportunity to speak on the amendment Moved by Councillor Patrick Wilson. Subsequently, the following Members exercised their right to address the Chamber:-
A vote was then taken on the amendment which was declared as follows:-

For - 5

Against - 43

Abstain - 3

On being put to the meeting, the amendment proposed by Councillor Patrick Wilson was declared LOST by 5 votes to 43 (3 Abstentions).

The Chair then afforded all Members in the Chamber the opportunity to speak on the amendment Moved by Councillor Paul Bissett. Subsequently, the following Members exercised their right to address the Chamber:-

Councillor Garth Oxby
Councillor Susan Phillips
Councillor Patricia Schofield
Councillor Stephen Coddington
Councillor Mick Jameson

Councillor Joe Blackham exercised his right to reply.

A vote was then taken on the amendment which was declared as follows:-

For - 26

Against - 21

Abstain - 4

On being put to the meeting the amendment proposed by Councillor Paul Bissett was declared CARRIED by 26 votes to 21 (4 Abstentions).

Members were then afforded the opportunity to speak on the Substantive Motion. Subsequently, the following Members exercised their right to address the Chamber:-

Councillor Tony Brown
Councillor Stuart Exelby
Councillor Eric Tatton-Kelly
Councillor Tony Sackett
Councillor Garth Oxby
Councillor Allan Jones
Councillor Margaret Pinkney
Councillor Patrick Wilson
Councillor Joe Blackham exercised his right to reply.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.4, a recorded vote was taken on the Substantive Motion which was declared as follows:-

For - 21


Against - 19


Abstain - 4

Councillors Andrea Milner, Carol Williams, Martin Williams and Patrick Wilson.

On being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared CARRIED by 21 votes to 19 (4 Abstentions).

RESOLVED that this Council deplores the total absence of any meaningful Managerial leadership and Political leadership from Labour Cabinet Members and the then Labour Mayor within Children’s Services, this following the reports from Mark Eales in January, 2005 and Bron Sanders in March, 2007. The result of which has been the direct intervention of Government into Children’s Services within Doncaster.

The principle reasons given for this intervention are as follows:-

- The lack of a strong and settled management team.
- Ineffective political leadership from Labour Cabinet Members and Labour Mayor.
- Weak local partnerships.

The Council requires the Cabinet at that time and the Elected Mayor to account for this situation.

144. APPRECIATION TO THE CHAIR – COUNCILLOR PAUL CODDINGTON

On behalf of Members in the Chamber prior to the conclusion of business, Councillor Edwin Simpson congratulated the Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Coddington, who had carried out an excellent job in representing the citizens of Doncaster, following a difficult start and conclusion to the year.