

## **MINUTES**

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 21 September 2015 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

**PRESENT:** HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Flavell (in the Chair).

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, Eales, Eales, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Hill, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Lynch, Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Shaw, Smith and Stone

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Hadland, Larratt, Nunn and Golby declared personal, non-pecuniary interests in Item 13, Motion i) as Members of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.

Councillors Bottwood, Oldham, Hallam and Lane declared personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 13, Motion i) as substitute Members of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.

Councillors G Eales, Stone, Smith, Marriott, McCutcheon and Ashraf declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 13, Motion ii) as Members of a Trade Union.

### **2. MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

### **3. APOLOGIES.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Eldred, Malpas, Walker, Russell, Gowen, Beardsworth and Meredith.

### **4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, sent condolences to Northampton Borough Council Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Planning Mr Steven Boyes, on his recent bereavement.

The Mayor informed Council that the Gala Ball would be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> November at the County Cricket Ground. Tickets would be £40 each and urged members to purchase tickets from the Mayor's Office.

The Mayor mentioned that there had been a presentation of the Ushakov medal for the arctic convoy veterans which was held at the Guildhall on the 18<sup>th</sup> September

2015 and further noted that she had met with Twining Association visitors from Marberg.

The Mayor advised that she completed her Wing Walk on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to raise money for charity the total amount was yet to be confirmed. She also informed Council that her son Charles completed a Marathon whilst in Iceland, raising £697 including gift aid for the Mayor's charity.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS**

Dr Ron Mendell President of the Trade Union Council submitted a petition to the Council. He advised the petition dealt with the Trade Union bill which the Trade Union Council found unnecessary and unjust. Dr Mendell mentioned that strike action and activity was currently low and that the bill would be unjust due to the restrictions it would impose on civil liberties. He noted that the use of agency immigrant workers was not cohesive to social cohesion.

Mr Tony Mallard addressed the Council on homelessness. He mentioned that the welfare state was created by society during the latter days of the great depression and noted that during the era homelessness was non-existent. He advised the Council that homelessness was, however, becoming a major issue in Northampton Towne Centre today and urged the Council to end the indignity.

Mr Hufferdine Smith addressed Council on the Housing Cabinet report. While he was pleased to see work was about to commence on the new housing strategy he mentioned that 250 voids and 4,000 homes were behind schedule. He asked the Council to urge builders to build on Brownfield sites rather than Greenfield and suggested needs assessment be carried out on Travellers by the Council. Mr Hufferdine Smith asked the Council to use their position to address the needs of the poor, homeless and vulnerable.

## **6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Mayor advised that 4 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers given were as tabled (included in an updated agenda on the website) unless states supplementary questions were asked – detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor Bottwood advised that the campaign terminology with regards to "Don't be a tosser" was not to their liking and therefore not used.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor Hadland explained that not all parties could be pleased regarding the Medieval Knight's trail.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

Councillor Markham submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She congratulated the Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) over the past 5 years and wished them success in the ballot, which would close on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 5pm. It was noted that there had been a lot of Town Centre activities, including a return of the Beach, and 'Love Northampton – Let's Keep it Clean'. She also referred to the active programme of multi-agency working, looking at addressing Child Sexual Exploitation. She thanked Members who has attended the services marking VJ Day and spoke of future commemorations.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Markham explained that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with NPH was underway and extensive work had already been undertaken. She also confirmed that with regards to rogue landlords and unlicensed HIMOs, a confidential hotline had already been put in place which would be publicised more once the University term resumed. With regards to the current refugee crisis, Councillor Markham commented that meetings with CLG had been diarised which had been put in place prior to the crisis and noted that the lead was very much from Government. In response to further questions, Councillor Markham explained that officers had met with the prospective consortium, at a very early stage, but that the concern of the administration was looking after the public purse. She confirmed that officers were dealing with parties involved and that the Council remained as owners of the land. It was further confirmed that officers were working closely with the Department of Work and Pensions to ensure the transition to Universal Credits was well maintained.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. He explained that Audit Committee training would be held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and commented that it was for all members of the Council and not exclusively for Audit Committee members. He thanked officers for their hard work stated that the projected underspend of £271,000 was very positive. In response to questions asked, he explained that the reason for the high turnover of staff was down to the needs of individuals. He further confirmed that LGSS were not failing even though numerous people had left the Revenue and Benefits department, despite it having been one of the best in the Country. He further stated that £3.6 million had already been saved since working in partnership with LGSS.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and stated that over 500 people had taken advantage of the Heritage Open Days. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland commented that an examiner had been appointed to assess the Spring Borough Neighbour Plan and stated that Neighbourhood Planning was the most localised forms of Planning and that the National Planning Policy Framework attached great value to Neighbourhood Plans and the administration recognised the work that had gone into the Spring Borough Neighbourhood Plan. He also informed Council that the café in the Skatepark was not exempt from paying business rates.

Councillor Bottwood submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that Abington Park and Delapre Abbey had recently been awarded the Green Flag Award. It was also noted that Northampton had received the Silver gilt in the Bloom Awards. In response to questions asked, Councillor Bottwood explained that the wild flower beds recently installed around the town would hopefully be extended once a cost review had been completed. He also noted that there was a concern about the amount of rubbish and fly-tipping and asked that members of the public and Councillors use the App to report instances to resolve the problem.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and in the absence of Councillor Eldred, his Cabinet Member report too. She noted that all the forums would be doing a workshop on the 26<sup>th</sup> October to celebrate Diwali. It was noted that there had been an increase in overall crime and that the recent increase in the number of violent crimes against the person could be attributed to the change in reporting. Crimes committed on mobile phones and the internet was also being recorded. In response to questions asked Councillor King confirmed that they already worked with the voluntary sector and would continue to do so. She also explained that this year there had been a record number of visitors to Delapre Alive. She also mentioned that 'Love Northampton' was being advertised on websites, pamphlets and radio.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. It was explained that a permanent Private Sector Housing Manager had been recruited and that work had commenced on the development of the Housing Strategy which would be cross party.

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Gareth Eales stated that the Trade Union Bill went against the ethos of the Labour Group. The Government had commented that the Bill would bring about democratic legitimacy to Trade Unions and reported that the Bill had very strict rules on picketing and lifted the ban on using agency workers if there was strike action. He commented that the Bill was an ideological attack on Trade Unions and commented that it was reminiscent of McCarthyism. He further commented that he was a proud Trade Union members and that he worked hard to represent working people; intervention having been productive and progressive in resolving less sick time and increased productivity. He urged the Leader and the Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary expressing opposition to the repugnant Bill.

Councillor Markham responded by commenting that the Trade Union Bill was to create a balance to assist businesses so strikes would need fewer balloters and that there was a need to agree the Bill to ensure that schools stayed open and public transport continued to run as the recent strikes by tube drivers had been astronomical.

Responding, Councillor Eales suggested that the Miners' strike of 1984 could have been avoided should there have been more dialogue between the Unions and the Government.

## **9. CIL - APPROVAL OF THE CABINET REPORT**

Councillor Hadland submitted a report which sought approval to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Councillor Bottwood seconded the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the CIL Charging Schedule be approved in accordance with Regulation 25 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) to take effect from 1st April 2016 (Appendix 1 of attached Cabinet report)
2. That the CIL Regulation 123 List attached at Appendix 2 of the report be approved
3. That Exceptional circumstances relief be not applied to Northampton Borough
4. That the CIL policy on payments in kind and the Instalment Policy (Appendix 3 of the attached Cabinet report) be approved

## **10. DEVOLUTION OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POWERS ON CROSS BOUNDARY PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND IN RESPECT OF AN APPLICATION RELATING TO LAND TO THE REAR OF COTTINGHAM DRIVE, MOULTON**

Councillor Hadland submitted a report which sought Councils approval of the devolution of development control powers on cross boundary planning applications.

Councillor Lane seconded the report.

Councillor Larratt stated that he voted against a previous similar application and he was against the recommendations and that if approved, the Council would not receive any Section 106 monies and the interest of the residents of Northampton would not be protected.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Daventry District Council be devolved the discharge of this Council's planning control functions under Section 70 (1) (Part III) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to determine a proposed cross boundary planning application in relation to residential development on land to the rear of Cottingham Drive, Moulton.
2. That Planning Committee be delegated the discharge of the Council's planning control functions under Section 70 1) (Part III) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to determine cross boundary planning applications until the end of the municipal year.

## **11. EXEMPTION FROM CALL-IN AND URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS.**

Councillor Hadland submitted a report that sought the Council to note a decision that had been exempted from call –in; the decision being taken was urgent.

Councillor Markham seconded the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

## **12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2014-15**

Councillor Hallam submitted a report requesting Council to note performance in relation to its bowing and investment strategy for 2014-15.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the treasury management performance for 2014-15 (outturn), and updated treasury management data for quarter 1 of 2015-16 be noted.

## **13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

- i) Councillor McCutcheon proposed and Councillor Birch seconded:

“This Council notes that the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy has not worked out entirely to the benefit of Northampton.

This Council notes that much development will be placed just outside the Borough Boundary.

This Council further notes this means Northampton will have the challenges that come with large scale housing development. However, South Northamptonshire District Council and Daventry District Council will keep the additional Council Tax income and New Homes Bonus that will come from this new development on Northampton’s doorstep.

This Council believes the Borough Boundary, in the longer-term, should be extended to incorporate SUEs, as outlined in the Joint Core Strategy, which are immediately outside Northampton and also other very close developments such as Grange Park. So this Council believes there should be a limited expansion of the Northampton Borough Boundary.

This Council further believes if there is a review of the borough boundary it must be done with full public consultation”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

Mr R Mendell addressed Motion ii) and commented that he supported the Motion. He commented that as a Union member, he had thought it necessary to strike 7 times in 23 years and stated that the Trade Unions didn't always favour disruption and industrial action but that it was considered a necessity in certain cases. He also stated that Trade Unions offered day to day assistance with employees and also developed and shaped policies and their value should not be diminished.

ii) Councillor G Eales proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

“This Council recognises that in order to provide confidence to the staff at all levels, the senior leadership of the Council must work in close partnership with the Trade Unions who represent our employees. Northampton Borough Council will only deliver excellent public services when Trade Unions, councillors and senior management work together.

So this Council believes that it is important to develop a reputation as a good employer and to build a relationship with staff and their representatives based on mutual trust.

To this end the Council agrees the following:-

1. The Trade Unions have an important role to play in a democratic and accountable public authority.
2. To have regular local joint meetings with all the recognised staff Trade Unions.
3. To guarantee sufficient facility time and resources in order that the Trade Unions can properly represent all their members.
4. To re-enter national pay bargaining for local government”.

Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded an amendment:

Amended motion read:

“This Council recognises that Northampton Borough Council has undergone fundamental change over the last few years, and that in order to provide confidence to the staff at all levels the senior leadership of the Council must work in close partnership with its employees and their representatives. Northampton Borough Council will only deliver excellent public services when staff, councillors and senior management work together.

So this Council believes that it is important to develop a reputation as a good employer and to build a relationship with staff and their representatives based on mutual trust.

To this end the Council agrees the following:-

1. To commit to undertaking a full and transparent review of the current culture at Northampton borough Council and work to develop a climate where people can excel and are trusted to deliver the range of services residents across the borough expect.
2. That Trade Unions have a role to play in a democratic and accountable public authority”.

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

iii) Councillor Cali proposed and Councillor Haque seconded:

“This Council notes that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a cultural practice that makes some young girls in our local communities very vulnerable. It is often referred to as ‘cutting’ and is a form of child abuse. It happens to young girls in our county and in our town.

This Council believes we can act together to stop it happening in our town.

This Council will do the following:-

- Work with the Police and other agencies so that we understand the scale of the problem.
- Ensure all relevant front line staff through training are aware of this issue, how to support victims and how to support campaigners against the practice

This Council resolves to identify the groups that are campaigning against this practice in order to

- Sign post vulnerable girls and their families to them
- Support the campaigns by disseminating any appropriate literature
- Ensure the relevant local campaign groups are aware they have the support of this Council”.

Councillor King proposed and Councillor Patel seconded an amendment:

Amended motion to read:

“This Council notes that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a cultural practice that makes some young girls in our local communities very vulnerable. It is often referred to as ‘cutting’ and is a form of child abuse. It happens to young girls in our county and



in our town.

This Council believes we can act together to stop it happening in our town.

This Council will do the following:-

- Continue to work with the Police and other agencies so that we understand the scale of the problem.
- Ensure all relevant front line staff through training are aware of this issue and how to support victims.
- Continue to work with groups such as the Women's Forum and to support events such as International Women's Day in order to raise awareness of these issues.
- Acknowledge the work of the Scrutiny Panel into Interpersonal Violence, and the contribution to this work of groups such as the Women's Forum, BME SRP, Northampton Women's Aid

This Council resolves to identify the groups that are campaigning against this practice in order to

- Sign post vulnerable girls and their families to them
- Support the campaigns by disseminating any appropriate literature
- Ensure the relevant local campaign groups are aware they have the support of this Council".

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

Mr Hufferdine-Smith addressed Council on Motion iv) and congratulated the parks on being given their Green Flag status, but questioned what was being done about the other parks in the Borough. Amey and Enterprise, had not, in his opinion, undertaken a thorough job and there had been poor mowing and strimming and asked that more resources be given to Parish Councils to service the parks they are responsible for.

iv) Councillor Bottwood proposed and Councillor Ansell seconded:

"A Green Flag flying above a public open space recognises that the space meets the highest possible standards, is maintained beautifully and has excellent facilities. This Council welcomes with pride the award of Green Flag status to Abington Park and

Delapre Park.

This Council recognises the hard work of the staff, Friends groups and volunteers who have worked throughout the year to make these awards possible.

This council recognises the wealth of green and open spaces that Northampton has to offer, is rightly proud of these spaces and commits to protecting them and maintaining them to a high standard”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

**14. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL  
CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE  
CONSIDERED.**

None.

The meeting concluded at 8.41pm