

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 18 September 2017

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 6:30 PM WHEN THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS IS PROPOSED TO BE TRANSACTED

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES.

To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Meetings of the Council held on 10th July 2017 and the Extraordinary Council meeting on the 17th August 2017.

3. APOLOGIES.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

(Copy herewith)

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

(Copy herewith)

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Duffy to make a statement on “The Eastern District needs more attention and resources by both our local authorities”.

9. REVENUE AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE

(Copy herewith)

10. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

(Copy herewith)

11. INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

(Copy herewith)

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

- i) Councillor Smith to propose and Councillor Birch to second:

“This council will mark the centenary of women gaining the right to vote by honouring Margaret Bondfield as the first ever Woman MP for Northampton. Afterwards she became the first female cabinet minister, and the first woman to be a privy counsellor in the UK, when she was appointed Minister of Labour.

The women’s forum will be asked to consider a commemoration event in the Guildhall.

The Council further commits to honouring Margaret Bondfield by commissioning a statue of her to be placed in the Courtyard of the Guildhall. This will be paid for through external sponsorship.

This Council notes that 2018 is the centenary of the year in which women won the same voting rights as men. This gave propertied women aged 30 and over the right to vote for the very first time. Universal suffrage for both men and women followed 10 years later.”

- ii) Councillor Stone to propose and Councillor Ashraf to second:

“This Council notes the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government made a recent speech to the Local Government Association where he recognised ‘there is a serious shortage of decent affordable housing’ and went to talk about the stark inequalities in housing and said he was willing to listen to proposals from ambitious councils to try to address these issues.

In Northampton we have recognised for some time there is a desperate need for more social housing and have stated our aim to address this. We are an ambitious council and agree that members and officers will work together on a proposal to finance and build new social housing locally and put forward a proposal to government for their support and approval.”

- iii) Councillor Davenport to propose and Councillor Culbard to second:

“This Council notes that some parts of the town have a proliferation of HIMOs. This is causing problems in terms of noise, excess rubbish, lack of community cohesion and car parking pressures.

This Council further notes that in recent times it has introduced tougher restrictions with

Article 4 directive in certain areas of town restricting HIMO's to 15 per cent in a 50 metre radius.

This Council believes it now needs to go further and consult on a policy similar to that of other local authorities; which is that Houses In Multiple Occupation will not be permitted at a greater density than 10 per cent of dwellings within a 50 metre radius (subject to legal and planning law).

The areas requiring Article 4 directives need to be kept under constant review”.

iv) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor B Markham to second:

“To make the budget process both fairer and more transparent ,council calls on the administration to scrap the special expenses charges, when preparing the 2018/19 draft budget”

v) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor Meredith to second

“The use of Bed and Breakfast to provide temporary emergency accommodation for homeless people, in particular families, should always be a last resort. B & B is particularly unsuitable and disruptive for families and at a time of growing homelessness and represents poor value for money within a stretched budget. We believe that it is time for the authority to follow Reading Council and others and use prefabricated units to create a stock of temporary emergency housing to provide homes for families while they are waiting authority-owned or other social housing”.

vi) Councillor B Markham to propose and Councillor Beardsworth to second:

“This council believes that motions passed by a majority vote are important and that the public would expect them to be acted on.

There should we believe be a report-back process on action taken and where appropriate results.

Where the authors of a motion have specifically requested that the matter be referred to Overview and Scrutiny then the matter can be dealt with by them but in other cases there should be an item on the council agenda to cover progress on such motions.

We request that an all-party and officer working party be set up to determine the format in which such reports are presented.

This working party should also review how we feedback information about petitions submitted by members of the public. The working group to report back to council by the end of 2017”.

vii) Cllr Hallam to propose and Councillor King to second:

This Council recognises the value of its parks and open spaces that are well used by residents and visitors. Therefore, it shares the community’s concern about illegal encampments occupying our parks and open spaces as well as private areas across the Borough.

Councillors and Officers have been in continual contact with local residents during the periods of many illegal encampments throughout this year, and have been extremely concerned by the reports of anti-social and threatening behaviour, as well as fly-tipping and

damage to parkland around the encampments.

Northampton Borough Council (NBC) subscribes to the Countywide Traveller Unit (CTU), a joint initiative between councils, and led by Northamptonshire County Council. NBC also delegates its powers under sections 77 and 78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to the CTU. For several years this has proven to be the most effective way of dealing with illegal encampments. We recognise that the legal process is lengthy and can cause a good deal of inconvenience and anxiety to the local residents.

NBC seeks to achieve a balance between actively discouraging illegal encampments and maintaining access for residents, recognising that it is not possible to completely secure parks from those who are determined to set up illegal encampments without affecting residents' rights of access to their local parks and open spaces. Bollards and posts can be an effective means of preventing unauthorised access to our parks and open spaces. The bollards are designed to prevent any motorised vehicles gaining access as they all have the potential to damage green spaces, and more importantly, put the people who use our parks at risk. Therefore, NBC has last month again started the installation of bollards and posts around our town's green spaces.

While most people respect the signage we have in place, installing bollards is one of the ways we can make sure that our parks can be maintained to a high standard for everyone to enjoy.

This Council resolves to:

- 1) Call on the police to make use of all powers at their disposal to remove as soon as possible any illegal encampments from our parks and open spaces, bearing in mind the legal duties placed on the council to assess the welfare needs of relevant groups
- 2) Investigate further legal opportunities to prevent / deter illegal encampments;
- 3) Continue to work closely with the CTU and the police to increase efficiency and identify ways of speeding up the eviction process whilst continuing to abide by all the legal requirements.

viii) Councillor King to propose and Councillor Larratt to second:

“The Keep Safe Scheme aims to support people with learning disabilities to keep safe and get help in an emergency when out and about in Northamptonshire. Keep Safe, together with Safe Places, works under the Safe Places Organisation, which unites all the Safe Place (and Keep Safe) schemes by having all the information in one place so everyone can see it.

Northampton Borough Council recognises the importance of the Keep Safe Scheme and will be training all new staff at the one stop shop during their induction.

Northampton Borough Council aims to be a Keep Safe place, accessible to all”.

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

Simon Bovey – Interim Chief Executive
The Guildhall
Northampton

Public Participation

1. Comments and Petitions

- 1.1 A member of the public (or an accredited representative of a business ratepayer of the Borough) may make a comment or present a petition on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. A comment or presentation of a petition shall be for no more than three minutes. No notice of the nature of the comment to be made or of the petition is required except for the need to register to speak by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

(Public comments and petitions will not be taken at the Annual Council Meeting or other civic or ceremonial meetings.)

NOTES

- i. Comments may be on one or more subjects but each person has no longer than three minutes to have their say.*
- ii. The same person may make a comment and present a petition on different subjects. In such instances that person will have three minutes to make their comment and a separate three minutes to present a petition.*

2. Member and Public Questions

- 2.1 A member of the public (or business ratepayer of the Borough) may ask a maximum of two written questions at each meeting, each limited to a maximum of 50 words, on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. Each question shall:
- be submitted in writing and delivered, faxed or e-mailed to Democratic Services no later than 10.00am seven calendar days before the day of the meeting; and
 - include the name and address of the questioner and the name of the Cabinet member/Committee Chair to whom the question is put.

- 2.2 At the meeting, copies of all questions and the responses to them from the public and Members will be made available to the public and press. The Mayor may allow one supplementary question, without notice, that arises directly from the original question or response.

(Questions will not be taken at the Annual Council Meeting or at civic or ceremonial meetings or meetings called to deal with specific items of business.)

NOTES

In respect of paragraph 2.1 above, questions may be rejected on certain grounds that are set out on page 4-12 of the Council's Constitution and which may be viewed at www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1919 or by seeking advice using the contact details below.

3. Motions

- 3.1 A member of the public may register to speak to a motion under the ‘Notices of Motion’ item on the agenda. Registration to speak must be made to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the day to the meeting. Speaking to a motion is restricted to three minutes per person.

(The ‘Notices of Motion’ item will not be taken at the Annual Council meeting or meetings called for civic or ceremonial purposes.)

4. General

A member of the public may make a comment, present a petition, ask a question or speak to a motion at the same meeting subject to the restrictions set out above.

5. Contacts

Democratic Services: e-mail democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk

Tel 01604 837722

Mail Democratic Services
Northampton Borough Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton NN1 1DE

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 10 July 2017 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor G Eales (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Caswell, Choudary, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, T Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th June 2017 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Malpas, M Hill, Parekh, Chunga, Russell, Cali and McCutcheon.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor thanked the members of the Council who had attended the ceremony at All Saints Church on the 9th July 2017 and noted that £421 had been raised for the Mayors Charity. The Mayor announced that Armed Forces Day had been successful and noted that on the 1st July 2017 he had attended the Northampton festival. The Mayor commented that calendar invites would be sent to all members to notify them of future mayoral engagements that they may wish to attend including the Alfie Bears Picnic, Caribbean themed Gala Dinner and Blue-light boxing match.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Scott Maloney (MND Association Northamptonshire) addressed Council and commented that over 40 other Councils had adopted the MNF charter and spoke of the suffering of those people who were directly and indirectly by the illness. He stated that there was no cure for Motor Neuron Disease or prevention but by adopting the charter, the Council would show support for those suffering and respect for people suffering from MND and their carers.

Mr Patrick Cross (Chair of WASPRA) commented that he was pleased to see the Council supporting the Orbital Road and reported that the County Council Cabinet report would need to have a business case prepared which would justify the project.

He stated that there was a need for the proposed orbital road to be fit for purpose and recommended that an Overview and Scrutiny Panel be established to examine the proposal.

Ms Dagma King commented that she was currently very disappointed with the benches around the bus station and stated that she had recently been in contact with Blackpool Council who had installed benches that were not wide enough for people to sleep on and commented further that the lack of toilet facilities was also an ongoing issue and asked that a response to her ongoing queries be completed within 14 days.

Mr Brian Hoare commented that the Emission Report from the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel was not fit for purpose and failed to address the objectives that they had set themselves. He commented that the Council were sending out mixed messages; opening up Abington Street to traffic at a cost of £6 million and then stating that shoppers should leave their cars at home. He questioned why the Council had ceased recording air quality at the bus station in 2016.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 7 questions had been received from Councillor and members of the public and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers were given as tabled (included in an updated agenda on the Council's website) unless were stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below:

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 5, Councillor Nunn commented that road safety was a responsibility of the County Council.

Referring to question 7, Councillor Stone explained that she had called-in the Delapre Cabinet decision as Leader of the Labour Group and that the administration had a history of making poor decisions and that she wanted to ensure due diligence to ensure prevent further reputational damage to the Council.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn, as Leader of the Council, submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that he had attended a meeting of the Borough and Districts Councils involved in the unitary proposal and reported that a future briefing event would be held for all NBC Councillors once a fuller analysis and financial implications had been fully examined.

In response to questions asked, the Leader commented that the new Government may not have the same appetite for Unitary Councils but that it would still remain high on the administrations agenda. He explained that the Council did have a number of low emission strategies and noted that he recognised the importance of clean air and a reduction in pollution.

Councillor Larratt, as the Deputy Leader, submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that a Cabinet response to the Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Emission Strategy (Action Plan) would be presented to the Cabinet meeting in September 2017.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Larratt confirmed that he would examine the potential to extend training on FGM to officers, having noted the success of the training sessions for Councillors. In reference to the Market Traders, it was explained that it had been agreed that a steering group be established in order to consult with traders and shop owners and that traders would be consulted on changes relating to the configuration of the market square. Referring to street lights, Councillor Larratt commented that there was a need to identify the streets lights owned by the Borough Council in order to ensure that they were properly maintained and faulty ones reported. He further commented that he would look at making the BBC programme 'Three Girls' available for Councillors to watch and noted that it was essential that Child Exploitation be prevented at all costs.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Members report and responded to the public speaker who had raised concerns about the provision of benches, that there had been 2 extra seats in had been instated at the bus station in March 2017. With regard to erecting seating in the shelters, it was noted that the matter had been looked into but explained that further seating would restrict wheelchairs users and buggies and therefore the seating was erected between two of the shelters.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland confirmed that consultation on the erection of further statues had not been undertaken as the decision to commission the five statues had been taken under his delegated authority as the relevant Cabinet Member. He commented that some of the costs of the statue had been received from the Town Centre Improvement Budget.

In response to a further question asked, Councillor Hadland commented that ward Councillors were consulted on planning applications in their ward and that all planning applications were subject to the council policies and protocols. He noted that there was ongoing dialogue with Churches shoes on the development of the old bus depot and reported that the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) had advised that there was no need for any further transit sites for gypsies and travellers.

Councillor Eldred submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there had been an overall underspend on just over £1 million which would be put back into reserves. In relation to Revenues and Benefits, Councillor Eldred explained that the service was continuing to review impacts of the 2017/118 CTRS scheme to ensure that there was a balance between recovery and support.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Eldred commented that even though all local authorities would have to bring forward their future statement of accounts, there was currently no intention to expand the service area. He also commented that the Council were looking at various ways to secure funding and investments.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and commented that there would be a ghost tour in the Town Centre and noted the success of the Music

Festival, which was held on the 18th June 2017. She further confirmed that she would share information that had been gathered from the youth forum on their attitudes and behaviours towards gambling.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that there were two parks in Northampton that were to be re-awarded the Green Flag status and thanked the gardeners for their continued hard work in helping to achieve green flag status.

At this juncture of the meeting, the Mayor informed Council that the allocated time had been met and no further Cabinet member reports would be heard.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Ashraf stated that Northampton, as a Town, was growing rapidly and noted that there were currently 4,000 families on the housing waiting list. She reported that since 2012, 5,000 council homes had been sold and commented that housing people in bed and breakfasts was not acceptable or suitable in the current age. She voiced her concerns that the Council may be inadequately prepared in the wake of the Grenfell incident and questioned the safety of residents. She further reported that she was pleased with the response of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) and the Fire Service and stated the need for collaborative working.

Councillor Hibbert, as the relevant Cabinet Member stated that he did not disagree that there should be more and better housing but argued that there was a limited amount; more houses were being built including Lakeview and Dallington Grange. He also noted that NPH intended to build 100 new homes a year and clarified that the number of people on the housing waiting list was 3,500 and noted that it was better for people to be temporarily housed in Bed and Breakfasts than it was to be homeless and on the streets.

In response, Councillor Ashraf stated that there was a need for better homes that were cheap to run and that were sustainable and an investment in the future.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, submitted a report which required Council to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2016/ 17. He thanked the Scrutiny Officer and the various Panel Members for their work.

Councillor Walker seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2016/17 be noted.

10. CHANGES TO CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Larratt submitted a report which sought Council's agreement to a change in the appointment to Consultation Appointments.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sargeant replace Councillor Malpas on Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel (CEFAP)

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Mayor advised that an altered motion, combining motion i) and vi) had been accepted as an alteration and had been circulated to Members. Council agreed to accept the alteration. The Council agreed with the consent of the original seconder, Councillor Beardsworth, that the seconder would be Councillor Hibbert.

i) Councillor Meredith proposed and Councillor Hibbert seconded:

This council makes the following commitment to all tenants living in Council buildings To feel safe in their homes and have the right fire protections as provided by the Fire Service.

In light of recent events, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) have already instructed the installation of sprinklers in their only high-rise Council building, St Katherine's Court.

The Council will continue a review of the other 10 buildings in conjunction with the Fire Service and any further Government guidance.

To ensure those in private buildings are also suitably protected, this Council resolves to undertake an urgent review of the planning policy with regard to residential developments and provisions for sprinkler systems in all new residential buildings of 5 storeys or above. The Council will also review the possible need for two separate stair cases to exit tower blocks. NPH to be asked to provide tenants of tower blocks fire safety training"

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

The Mayor noted that within accordance to Part 4 (4.2) of the Constitution, motion ii) had been withdrawn.

iii) Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Duffy seconded:

"This Council notes there is a growing and serious problem with social overcrowding in council houses.

This Council believes that the national statutory overcrowding regulations are insufficient. Children in particular are affected as there is a lack of space to study, store their clothes and toys, play with siblings, and invite friends over.

This Council will therefore determine a local standard to include the right to a minimum floor space, storage for clothes and personal effects.

We further ask the Cabinet to investigate ways to help families living in socially overcrowded conditions to move on to appropriate accommodation as their family needs develop.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Choudary, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, T Eales, Gowen, Haque, B Markham, Marriot, Meredith, Smith and Stone

There voted against the motion: Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, Kilby-Shaw, King, Lane, Larratt, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Sargeant and Walker.

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

iv) Councillor King proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded:

“There are 5,000 people at any one time in the UK with Motor Neurone Disease (MND), it can affect any adult of any age and nearly 2,200 people die from this rare but fatal neurological disease each year.

MND describes a group of diseases that affect the nerves (motor neurones) in the brain and spinal cord that tell your muscles what to do. With MND, messages from these nerves gradually stop reaching the muscles, leading them to weaken, stiffen and waste.

Motor Neurone Disease is a devastating condition. Progress has been made through research but much more needs to be done.

This motion, therefore, calls for this Council to adopt the MND Charter and thereby support achieving quality of life, dignity and respect for people with MND and their carers.

The Charter:

- 1) People with MND have the right to an early diagnosis and information.
- 2) People with MND have the right to access quality care and treatments.
- 3) People with MND have the right to be treated as individuals and with dignity and respect.
- 4) People with MND have the right to maximise their quality of life.
- 5) Carers of people with MND have the right to be valued, respected, listened to and well supported.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

v) Councillor Larratt proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded:

“This Council welcomes the development of plans for the Northern Orbital Road around Northampton, from the A43 at Moulton to the A4500 near Harpole. We also welcome the consultation on the emerging plans.

This Council confirms its support for the provision of this road for many reasons, not least to alleviate traffic congestion in the Kingsthorpe area, and wishes to see its construction as soon as possible.

To provide the road at the earliest opportunity, while recognising that its provision is dependent on developer contributions, this Council requires that all further development sites, not currently included within the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, but attributed to the growth of Northampton, are concentrated in the vicinity of the proposed road so that they can contribute to the delivery of this much needed infrastructure and secure its early delivery”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

The Mayor noted that motion vi) would not be moved and as agreed earlier in motion iv) would therefore be treated as a withdrawn motion.

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

There were no matters of urgency.

The meeting concluded at 9.03pm

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Thursday, 17 August 2017 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor G Eales (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Chunga, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, T Eales, Eldred, Golby, Haque, Hibbert, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Marriott, McCutcheon, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Malpas, Caswell, Choudary, Flavell, Hadland, Hallam, J Hill, B Markham, M Markham, Meredith and Parekh.

3. DELEGATING FUNCTIONS OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER FOR THE COUNCIL TO THE BOROUGH SECRETARY

Councillor Larratt submitted a report which sought Council's approval to approve the delegation of the functions of the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer to the Borough Secretary.

Councillor Patel seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the delegation of the functions of the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer to the Borough Secretary from the date of this meeting of Full Council be approved and to delegate the power to the Constitutional Review Working Party to amend the constitution to reflect the foregoing changes

4. APPOINTMENT OF A HEAD OF PAID SERVICE ON AN INTERIM BASIS UNTIL FURTHER RESOLUTION OF THE FULL COUNCIL TO APPOINT A PERMANENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Councillor Nunn proposed a report that sought Council's approval to appoint a Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive on an interim basis

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Simon Bovey as the Council's Head of Paid Service from the date of this meeting and to appoint Mr. Bovey as Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service from 6th September 2017 until 5th March 2018 be approved.

The meeting concluded at 6.34pm

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 1

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Culbard

Due to some public concerns, please can the Administration carry out a Travellers Needs Assessment and if necessary a new permanent site for them to be included in the Local Plan?

Response

The Borough Council, in conjunction with Daventry District and South Northamptonshire Councils, commissioned a review of the West Northampton Travellers Accommodation Needs Study in 2016. The findings of the study were published in January 2017 and are available on the Borough Council's website: <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9459/west-northamptonshire-travellers-accommodation-needs-study-2017.pdf>

As such the study provides the Council with up to date evidence on the needs of Travellers to inform the preparation of the Part 2 Local Plan. It should be noted that the study did not identify any households in Northampton which meet the planning definition of a Traveller and concluded that there is no need for additional pitches.

Councillor Hadland
Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 2

Question to Cllr Hallam from Cllr Smith

Commercial waste bins on pavements and roads are a problem. What can the council do about it?

Response

The County Council are the authority who have legal powers to take enforcement action in relation to waste bins blocking pavements and roads. The Neighbourhood Wardens work closely with colleagues at the County Council to deal with specific problem locations.

Councillor Hallam
Cabinet member for Environment

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 3

Question to Cllr King from Cllr Birch

How is the Public Space Protection Order working?

Response

It is still early days in the introduction of the PSPO, but so far it has been well received. Education and awareness raising has been the main thrust, led by Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSO's. As of September Fixed Penalty Notices, and if relevant Community Protection warnings will be issued to those that breach the Order.

The first public spaces protection order to gate Marble Arch was passed by cabinet last Wednesday the 13th September.

Councillor King

Cabinet member for Community Safety & Community Engagement

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 4

Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Stone

How many NPH housing officers have been cut since May 2015?

Response

No major injuries as far as I know.

However, staffing questions are a management issue for NPH and as you have representatives on the Board of Directors, I suggest you ask them to take this up directly.

Councillor Hibbert

Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 5

Question to Cllr Eldred from Cllr Chunga

Will this LA follow the lead set by 20 other LAs including Liverpool and Tower Hamlets and abolish Council Tax for care leavers under 21 years?

Response

This Administration notes it is the responsibility of the County Council to prepare care leavers under 21 for the financial pressures of living in their own homes.

However, the Administration is keen to support the most vulnerable in society and will consider the financial position for care leavers under 21 in developing its Budget and Council Tax Support scheme for next financial year.

Councillor Eldred
Cabinet member for Finance

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 6

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr McCutcheon

How many Shisha bars are there in town?

Response

There are five Shisha Bars in the town. Shisha Bars do not require specific licensing, although some will have premises licences either because they serve alcohol or because they are open after 23.00.

Councillor Hadland

Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 7

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr McCutcheon

Please can we have an update in relation to the Greyfriars site?

Response

The Borough Council continue to work with the preferred developer in relation to the Greyfriars site.

Cabinet expect to consider a Cabinet report in the near future.

Councillor Hadland
Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 8

Question to Cllr Nunn from Cllr Stone

Will Northampton join the Mutual being set by the LGA to ensure we can take advantage of value for money insurances?

Response

The Council welcomes the LGA's proposal for the creation of a mutual insurance organisation which may offer Local Authorities more competition, an alternative basis of cover and possibly additional control over their insurance requirements. However we must at the outset recognise that it may also expose local authorities to greater financial risk and may not offer the same contractual certainty, protection, risk management solutions or innovation as the commercial market.

The Council will consider any such mutual insurance organisation, along with the commercial insurance market, for its future insurance purposes.

We are currently going through the procurement for insurance via our LGSS arrangements, and anticipate that this will achieve savings. This will be confirmed as part of our budget proposals.

Councillor Nunn
Leader of the Council

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 9

Question to Cllr Nunn from Cllr Stone

Please can we have a breakdown of staff by pay grade showing gender, race, age?

Response

Demographic Information

Pay Grade	Gender	Ethnicity	Age
Living Wage	Female x 2	White British	56 and over x 1
Apprentice	Female x 4	White British x 2 Undisclosed x 2	25 and under x 4
NCC M grades	Female x 2	White British	46-55 x 1 56 and over x 1
Grade 01	Female x 4	White British x 2 Black African x 1 Undisclosed x 1	36-45 x 1 46-55 x 1 56 and over x 2
Grade 02	Female x 4	White British x 4	46-55 x 2 56 and over x 2
Grade 03	Female x 22	Bangladeshi x 1 Black Caribbean x 1 Eastern European x 1 White British x 13 White Irish x 1 White & Asian x 1 Undisclosed x 1	25 and under x 4 26-35 x 2 36-45 x 4 46-55 x 8 56 and over x 4
	Male x 21	Bangladeshi x 1 Black Caribbean x 1 Undisclosed x 6 Irish Traveller x 1 White British x 11 White & Black Caribbean x 1	25 and under x 2 25-35 x 4 36-45 x 5 46 -55 x 5 56 and over x 5
Grade 04	Female x 49	Undisclosed x 12 Black Caribbean x 2 Indian x 1 White & Black Caribbean x 1 White British x 33	25 and over x 9 26-35 x 4 36-45 x 11 46-55 x 13 56 and over x 7

	Male x 12	Undisclosed x 3 White British x 9	25 and under x 2 26-35 x 4 36-45 x 1 46-55 x 2 56 and over x 3
Grade 05	Female x 42	Undisclosed x 5 Black Caribbean x 1 Indian x 1 White British x 34 White Irish x 1	25 and under x 3 26-35 x 8 36-45 x 14 46-55 x 7 56 and over x 11
	Male x 10	Undisclosed x 1 White British x 9	25 and under x 2 26-35 x 4 36-45 x 1 46-55 x 2 56 and over x 1
Grade 06	Female x 31	Undisclosed x 10 Black Caribbean x 1 Indian x 1 Other x 2 White British x 17	26-35 x 7 36-45 x 8 46-55 x 14 56 and over x 2
	Male x 18	Undisclosed x 6 White Irish x 1 White British x 11	26-35 x 1 36-45 x 4 46-55 x 7 56 and over x 2
Grade 07	Female x 19	Undisclosed x 3 Black African x 1 Black Caribbean x 2 Chinese x 1 Asian x 1 White British x 11	26-35 x 3 36-45 x 6 46-55 x 6 56 and over x 4
	Male x 12	Undisclosed x 1 Indian x 1 White British x 10	26-35 x 1 36-45 x 2 46-55 x 5 56 and over x 4
Grade 08	Female x 16	Undisclosed x 3 White British x 13	26-35 x 3 36-45 x 5 46-55 x 6 56 and over x 2
	Male x 9	Undisclosed x 1 White British x 8	26-35 x 3 36-45 x 2 46-55 x 4
Grade 09	Female x 2	White British x 2	46-55 x 2
	Male x 6	White British x 6	36-45 x 1 46-55 x 4

			56 and over x 1
Grade 10	Female x 5	White British x 5	26-35 x 1 46-55 x 4
	Male x 4	White British x 4	46-55 x 3 56 and over x 1
Grade 11	Female x 2	White British x 1 Chinese x 1	**
	Male x 1	White British	**
SMG 3	Female x 1	White British	**
	Male x 2	White British	**
SMG 4	Male x 2	White British	**
CDG	Female x 1	White British	**

** Age ranges have not been disclosed in these categories where there are few employees to protect their privacy.

Councillor Nunn
Leader of the Council

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 10

Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr Ashraf

How many children do we have living in temporary and emergency accommodation?

Response

As at 8 September 2017, a total of 307 children (in 149 homeless households) were living in temporary / emergency accommodation provided by the Council.

Of these, 223 children (73%) were living in self-contained accommodation and 84 children (27%) were living in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

Minimising the use of Bed & Breakfast and out of borough temporary accommodation is a priority for the Council and, to this end, Officers are working hard to accelerate the rehousing of homeless households and increase the supply of self-contained temporary accommodation (for homeless families) within the borough.

Councillor Hibbert

Cabinet member for Housing & Wellbeing

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 11

Question to Cllr Eldred from Cllr Meredith

When, despite objections from the Residents Association and local people, the barn next to Southfields Community Centre was sold off in 2014 the Community Centre were told that part of the proceeds from the sale would be used to improve facilities at the centre.

Can the Cabinet Member for Finance please tell me what has happened to the money received from the sale of this council asset and when people in Southfields can expect to see any of it spent on the community centre or car park?

Response

Southfields Barn was sold in September 2013 for £120,000. After making provision for HCA clawback the net receipt was £67,200.

There have not been any capital improvements to Southfields Community Centre to date.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 12

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Beardsworth

Has the Councillor visited Rushden Lakes since it opened?

Response

Yes.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 13

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr B Markham

Given that there appears to be no information as to when, what or if new coach facilities will be built as part of the Greyfriars regeneration project, what work will be carried out before the end of this calendar year to improve it?

Response

Cabinet expects to consider a report in relation to the Greyfriars site in the near future.

Further improvements to the shelters at Victoria Street are being planned for this calendar year.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 14

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Choudary

Sol Central and VUE cinema are part of any success for the future of our town centre. It is understood VUE wants to commit to Northampton for the longer term but there is much uncertainty surrounding the Greyfriars site. What is happening about progressing the proposed development of Greyfriars?

Response

The Borough Council continue to work with the preferred developer in relation to the Greyfriars site.

Other town centre cinema operators have had the confidence to invest significantly in growing their operations recently.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise

Question for Full Council Monday 18th September, 2017

Question 15

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Choudary

Please confirm that it is not this the Council's intention that the Greyfriars development proposals should blight investment in Northampton's existing town centre cinemas? Is Northampton Borough Council aware of the effect the proposed cinema development at Greyfriars is having on investment decisions of the existing cinemas in Northampton and preventing other leisure operators coming into Northampton?

Response

The Greyfriars site represents a huge opportunity to enhance the town centre economy and compliment the wider town centre's offer.

The Borough Council have previously commissioned a report into the town's cinema market. It reports that there is already room in the market for an additional operator and, as has happened in other similar towns, another cinema in the market will grow the amount of cinema visits by residents.

Other town centre cinema operators have had the confidence to expand their operation following the most recent plans for the Greyfriars site.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise

Agenda Item 7

Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18th September 2017



I have continued to work with Cabinet Members, Directors, and Officers across all areas of the council. Specific items include those below.

Interim Chief Executive

I am delighted that Simon Bovey is now in post full-time as Interim Chief Executive. Whilst, at the time of writing, this has only been for a few days, Simon has already made himself known personally to all staff, and has quickly understood many of the key challenges and issues that the council is dealing with, and I am certain that his skills, experience, knowledge of local government and of Northampton are already making him a valuable asset to the council and the town.

Amongst the priorities that I have discussed with Simon are the need to make the working environment one in which our staff colleagues feel inspired to contribute ideas to deliver the best service we can for our residents, and to build strong partnerships with other key organisations around the town, both public organisations and private, to drive the town ahead.

Unitary Status

Deloitte's report that they are nearing the completion of their work, and on 13th September a workshop is being held with the Chief Executives of all the participating Districts and Boroughs, in order to finalise their report. It has been agreed that immediately following this they will give us possible dates for the NBC Member workshop/briefing that has been previously agreed.

Governance

A number of papers are going to Audit Committee on 11th September, including an update of the actions under the Governance Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plan is an ongoing journey, but in order to make tracking the individual actions easier, they have now been reviewed and in some cases combined, which gives a clearer picture, and demonstrates that of the 48 actions, 22 have been fully implemented and 21 part implemented.

Infrastructure

On 5th September I was part of an NBC / NCC Officer and Member presentation to the National Infrastructure Commission in London. Our presentation to the Commissioners outlined the challenges that Northampton faces in terms of transport infrastructure. Our stated position was that, whilst we are enthusiastic to take advantage of the economic growth that could result from being a part of the Oxford – Cambridge growth Corridor, significant improvements are required to infrastructure in order to support the town's population and sustain its economy, and certainly to deliver the housing growth targets that we face.

Our presentation identified the pinch-points and local transport issues, and the specific large scale infrastructure needs that were highlighted included the delivery of the North West Relief road / Northern Orbital.

History & Heritage Project

As part of our determination to enhance the visitor experience to the town, and working in conjunction with Scrutiny's work on promoting our history and heritage, it was a pleasure to host a meeting of some of the town's many knowledgeable historians. As a result of the general knowledge that they have regarding the town's past, and the specific areas in which they each specialise, we have been able to put together a very comprehensive 'stock-take' of the town's historical assets, both physical assets and historic facts. Part of this work has helped to ensure the success of the recent Heritage Open Days weekend, and we are now looking at how we further promote our history, in due course linking this to Scrutiny's review of how other towns promote theirs.

Traveller Encampments

Over the summer we have seen a massive increase in the number of Traveller encampments across the town. Whilst some have not caused disruption or damage, it is sadly fair to say that many have, and the reports from residents of anti-social and threatening behaviour have been significant, as has the damage to property and the cost of cleaning up after these encampments. The council has sought to respond to the requests from individuals and Residents' Groups by working with the other agencies involved to act quickly, and by funding the installation of bollards at many of the town's open spaces, although clearly this is not an ideal solution.

Having been in continual dialogue with them throughout recent weeks, on 4th September Officers and Members met with representatives of the County-wide Traveller Unit, NCC, and the Police to review and discuss the most effective use of processes and powers to ensure that the swiftest and most effective action is taken at all times.

Other Activity

Amongst many other activities, on 15th July I was pleased to visit the Battlefield event at Delapre Abbey, and to take a tour of the battle site, and on 25th August to visit one of the NPH managed properties that has recently had photovoltaic solar panels installed, to bring significant energy bill savings to the tenants.

I was very proud to be asked to attend the Night Shelter event on 6th September, to thank the many volunteers who have supported either by giving their time regularly to help run the Shelter, or having given their time or donations to help renovate the building and get the Shelter open.

I recently visited the Pinnacle Climbing Centre, one of many leisure activities in the town, catering for a wide audience from families, all the way through to the more professional climber looking for a training centre of national significance. With the number of centres that the town has offering specialist leisure facilities, our intention is to work with them to promote them to both local residents and to the wider region as another reason to visit Northampton.

Finally, it is always a pleasure to attend our Corporate Induction sessions for newer staff, as I did again recently, and welcome new staff to the council, and it was a particular pleasure to tour the whole Guildhall recently and take the chance to say hello to all staff, as part of introducing Simon Bovey. Whilst busy daily life tends to mean only coming into contact with staff colleagues regarding particular issues as they crop up, it is always extremely rewarding to take time to understand the tremendous work that our staff are involved in, and to see more closely the expertise and dedicated work being carried out in each department.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council



Deputy Leader of the Council
Northampton Borough Council
Monday 18 September 2017

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council, and can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

Since the last meeting of the Market Advisory Group on 27th June when Traders were given plans of the Market layout as it currently exists and were asked to come up with their suggestions for its reconfiguration, a Steering Group has met twice to progress matters. All Traders were offered the opportunity of joining the Group.

At the first meeting of the Group, that unfortunately was not well attended, the reconfiguration was discussed. No suggestions for the reconfiguration had been received from Traders despite having issued them with plans to draw up their suggestions. The reconfiguration was also mentioned in a Newsletter to Traders asking them for views and ideas.

Since the consultation commenced we had also received a Healthcheck Report we commissioned through the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA). This report has been sent to all Traders, and will be discussed in further detail at the next MAG meeting in October on a date to be confirmed.

The report is critical of the narrow covered aisle towards the east of the market, and recognises the need to improve the presentation of the market by removing regularly empty stalls. The Steering Group therefore considered and agreed a plan to remove eight stalls adjacent to the covered aisle so that the aisle can be widened and the cover removed. Work to deliver this wider and uncovered aisle is due to commence during week commencing 11/09/17.

More stalls really need to be removed to reduce the number of regularly empty stalls, but it would be preferable to try and increase the number of Traders operating on our Market by creating more prime stalls on a second main aisle. If the reconfiguration doesn't improve occupancy rates, we may have to revisit the matter of removing of further stalls.

When the new configuration has been implemented, the new covers will be installed throughout the market. As previously reported, this is something that has been budgeted for in the current financial year.

As previously reported, Traders are very keen to modernise and have lock up stalls / units. The second meeting of the Steering Group, attended by Planning Officers, started to investigate the possibility of this. However, such stalls / units would have to be budgeted for in a future year.

Councillor Training

Councillor Development and Briefing Sessions already scheduled are as follows:

- **19/09/17 – Mechanics of Twitter** open to all Councillors. Two identical 1 hour sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Communications Team.
- **20/09/17 - Safeguarding Refresher** open to all Councillors. Two identical 2 hour sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Head of Housing & Wellbeing.
- **27/10/17 – Councillor Drop in Session - Setting up a Twitter Account** open to all Councillors. From 3.00 pm to 5.30 pm. To be delivered by the Communications Team.
- **30/10/17 - Councillor Briefing Session - Social Lettings Agency** open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Head of Housing & Wellbeing.
- **07/11/17 – Councillor Briefing Session - S106 and CIL** open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Head of Planning.
- **12/02/18 – Data Protection Training** open to all Councillors. Two identical sessions, one at 2.00 pm and one at 6.00 pm in the Jeffery Room. To be delivered by the Senior Information Governance Officer.

Further details regarding these sessions can be obtained from Tracy Tiff.

Members are asked to register to attend these events with Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

A further event, Personal Safety and Conflict Management for Councillors, is in the process of being arranged and the details will be communicated as soon as they are available.

The following will be included in the Councillor Development Plan 2017/18 and are still to be arranged:

- A briefing on FGM
- A briefing on Benefits, particularly Housing Benefits

First Aid Training is being offered to Councillors as and when spaces become available on courses.

Training proposed by the Standards Committee will also be arranged.

Specific Training will be arranged for Members of the Audit, Planning and Licencing Committees as required.

Scrutiny

The Working Group taking forward the outcome of the Match Day Parking Scrutiny Review is now up and running and has met twice.

Cabinet considered a report on Air Quality on 13th September 2017 taking forward some of the outcomes / recommendations of the Scrutiny Review - Emissions Strategy.

Web Casting

We are continuing to procure the equipment and services required to enable the Web Casting of Council and Committee Meetings with quotes being obtained.

Updating the audio visual equipment in the Council Chamber at the same time will make the facility more suitable for hiring out the venue to others for meetings etc. This will hopefully generate more income for the Council.

We still want to be able to start Web Casting either late in 2017 or early 2018.

Street Lighting

Cabinet considered a report regarding this Council taking on responsibility for those lights that Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) currently maintain that are not on their land or do not meet their lighting criteria within the Borough. Most of these lights are in our Park & Open Spaces and Housing Areas and on certain footpaths.

Once it has been resolved to take on some or all of the lights in question, a report will be commissioned to survey all of the NBC owned street lighting to include repairs required, lights which could be removed or improved, an options appraisal, energy saving solutions and invest to save opportunities.

The Working Group will continue to oversee progress and the delivery of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel.

The Officer / Member Working Group met on 7th August. Notes of the meeting are available.

The meeting had an update on the completion of the installation of the heritage lighting on St Giles Square, George Row, Mercers Row, Wood Hill and Fish Street. The heritage heads for the installed heritage columns will soon be fitted.

It remains our priority to establish a complete and accurate asset register of NBC / NPH owned street lights. This work is nearing completion. When completed all lighting columns will be plotted on a map of the Borough in preparation for them to be added to our interactive mapping service

The Working Group is continuing to pursue the issue of lights on South Bridge. Designs are being considered and costs are being obtained. NCC are happy for NBC to undertake this work, and have suggested that it be done when the bridge is closed for repair and they are prepared to work with us on this.

Joined up Working

Along with Julie Seddon and other NBC personnel, I recently attended a meeting with NCC representatives regarding the cleanliness and maintenance of gateways to Northampton. While NBC and NCC work together to in respect of the primary road network that is the responsibility of the Highways Authority (NCC), there remains a major problem in working with Highways England with regard to the A45. To try and improve this situation and secure a better standard of maintenance of the A45 through the Borough, with NCC and through two of our MP's, we hope to arrange a meeting with Highways England in the not too distant future.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18th September 2017

Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter

On 6th September 2017, the Leader of the Council and I attended a very special event to express the Council's appreciation of the fantastic support that the local community (including hundreds of individuals and dozens of organisations and businesses) has provided to set up the Nightshelter and ensure its continued success in helping homeless people to rebuild their lives.

The Nightshelter has now been open for 224 nights and, during that time, it has been used by more than 100 men who had been sleeping rough or were at risk of having to sleep rough. Almost two thirds of these men have moved on, in a planned way, to more settled accommodation.

Volunteers play a vital role in the day-to-day running of the Nightshelter. More than 70 have worked regular shifts at the Nightshelter and, between them, they have already invested more than 5,000 hours of their time in providing guests with the help, support and encouragement they need.

Anyone wishing to support the Nightshelter should visit the Council's website:

www.northampton.gov.uk/northamptonnightshelter

Tackling Criminal, Rogue and Irresponsible Landlords

On 19th July 2017, the Cabinet approved a Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy that sets out how the Council will impose financial penalties on landlords and letting agents, as an alternative to prosecution, to improve standards in Northampton's private rented sector.

Next month, Cabinet will consider a Business Case for using the additional income received from civil penalties and rent repayment orders to establish a Housing Enforcement Team that has the expertise and capacity to tackle the criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords that are letting out properties that are substandard and unsafe or operating licensable HMOs without a licence.

Earlier this month, the Council successfully prosecuted a landlord for failing to comply with an Improvement Notice. I was delighted to hear that the Magistrates Court imposed a £10,000 fine on the landlord and ordered him to pay all of the Council's legal costs and a victim surcharge.

Reducing the Council's use of Temporary Accommodation

In response to a sharp rise in the number of homelessness applications and a corresponding increase in the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation, an ambitious action plan has been developed to reduce the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

It is hoped that, as a result of these actions – funded, in part, from housing reserves – the number of households living in temporary accommodation will be halved during the next 12 months and that, during the same timeframe, the Council's use of Bed & Breakfast

accommodation will be reduced by 90% and the Council will stop using out-of-borough temporary accommodation.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18 September 2017

Councillor Community Fund

Since the beginning of April 2015, a total of £212,619 has been spent on local projects that have been supported through the Cllr Community Fund.

Partnership Support

The Service level Agreements and monitoring for the 2017-18 grants for the 32 organisations we are funding this year have all been finalised and signed. The first payments have been made.

The Small Grants funding, is now being administered back in house, there has been a smooth transition and the panel has had their first meeting.

Forums

The Partnerships and Communities team along with the Youth Forum held Northampton's first International Youth Day event on the Racecourse Pavilion on Saturday 12th August. The Umbrella Fair provided marquees and tables for the event which involved a range of youth services such as Northampton Integrated Sexual Health, Youth Gambling Education Trust and University of Northampton's Changemaker hub. Activities on the day included face and body painting, henna, sports and games activities and a 360 dome cinema experience, with music provided by Inspiration FM DJ, Mark Dean. The overall event was well attended and gave the Youth Forum a good opportunity to showcase their hard work and engage with community members with a questionnaire relating to their gambling awareness project.

Support offered to the Town Festival – Forums and communities tent, displays, information and performances from local community groups.

Forums Event held in partnership with the Police Crime Commissioner, 30 organisations attended for an information session and Q and A.

Remembering Srebrenica, small civic service and flag raising event held at the Guildhall, approx. 20 organisations, professionals and community members attended to mark the national day on 11th July 2017.

The Youth Forum once again took part in Heritage Tours on 10th September at the Guildhall. On 7th September the Youth Forum delivered findings of their Gamble aware project and consultation to University College London and Youth Symposium. They also presented a power point presentation.

UK Parliament Week have recognised the great work of the Youth Forum and are using them as a case study for future publicity for UK Parliament Week 13 – 19 November.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) have once again held a highly successful presence at The Umbrella Fair in August with their Q Stage tent. Guest speaker Peter Tatchell was greatly attended. Followed by a line-up of spoken word, singers and bands.

Events

The Bands in the Park season finished last Sunday and throughout the summer has attracted many visitors to Abington Park.

The council supported a number of events in the summer including, the Mela Festival (30th July) in Becketts Park which attracted many visitors who enjoyed the experience; the Circus (3rd- 8th August) on Midsummer Meadow attracted large crowds and was enjoyed by all who attended and the circus has already applied to come back again in 2018; the Umbrella Fair (19th & 20th August) on the Racecourse followed by the Fun Fair (Bank Holiday weekend); the Half Marathon (3rd Sept) starting in the town centre and finishing in Delapre Park; the Bubble Rush (10th Sept) in Abington Park) and the Rockin Roadrunner event (17th Sept) in Abington Park. A busy summer season across our parks.

Looking forward there are numerous events being delivered around the town and parks which the council will be supporting in different ways including the Street Circus (30th Sept) managed by the Town Centre BID in the town centre and on the market; Diwali (14th Oct) market square including the annual parade; Street Fair (21st – 24th Oct) market square and town centre; Oktoberfest (27th-28th Oct) on Midsummer Meadow.

The council will be delivering the Fireworks Display on Saturday 4th November on the Racecourse and the Christmas programme including Light Switch-On on Saturday 19th November, Frost Fair in the market square on Sunday 3rd December including a parade and other activities which are being finalised.

Culture & Heritage

Events at Abington Park Museum continue to be very well supported. Tours of the archaeology beneath Abington Park and of the museum itself sold out, attracting 46 adults. A wire bird making workshop was very popular with 30 adults attending. Summer holiday workshops in July and August were attended by over 340 young children and feedback was exceptionally positive. Themes ranged from Plant Pot Painting, Teddy Bears Picnic, Fascinating Fossils and a workshop learning how to sail a model yacht on the boating lake which was delivered by the Abington Park Model Yacht Club. A family event entitled Park Life attracted over 1,000 young families who enjoyed activities both inside and outside the museum including kite making.

A Summer Food Fair was attended by 1,800 visitors who enjoyed the regional food and drink stalls throughout the museum.

The Masque Theatre presented their summer production of Shakespeare's Antony & Cleopatra in the courtyard and despite the poor weather, the production attracted an audience of 479.

A talk to commemorate the centenary anniversary of Northampton hero Edgar Mobbs and his "Sportsman's Army" sold out – various local historians spoke at the event which was in association with the Western Front Association.

The wedding offer at Abington is taking shape and the application for ceremony licencing will be lodged in September, pending the finalisation of fire regulations. There will be open days for prospective clients in the run up to a soft opening planned for January.

Free advertising opportunities are being explored to maximise our visibility in regards to our availability as a venue for both weddings and general corporate hire.

Research is being undertaken for business planning purposes to develop our membership and retail offers.

The Museum Service has received a donation of a significant collection and archive belonging to the Grose family, a car manufacturer based in Northampton. The donation includes objects, images and other material (approx. 200 objects and 2D material).

Museum Expansion Project

The architects have completed the outline plans for the museum and link building. These are now being developed in preparation for submission to Planning this autumn with detailed design concepts reflecting the latest aspirations for the project.

Site investigations are now complete and covering several issues which we are taking into account, they include asbestos, some complex drainage work.

Subject to the Cabinet decision when this report was written, we will be asking the four interested parties to submit their tenders.

Customer Services

Customer Services have been working closely with Licensing and in July successfully migrated many Face to face enquires. These include, Vehicle renewals, Medical and DPS verification and issuing Taxi License plates. All OSS staff have been trained which has increased the staff availability to support customers to self-serve their new driver applications on line reducing impact within Customer Services and Licensing. This is the first phase of the migration project and we are now looking at phase two to migrate the remaining telephone enquiries.

Community Safety

Overall crime has seen a 1% increase since April 2017. Serious Acquisitive Crime has seen an overall increase of 2.7% (+101crimes). Within this vehicle crime has risen by 270 crimes. However, domestic burglary continues the reduction seen in the second half of 2017/18 with 50 less crimes compared to the same period last year, and due to the arrest of some key offenders this reduction is expected to continue. Close working with the police continues, focussing on specific crime types, with a partnership focus being taken.

Partnership Problem Solving training has been delivered to Sector Police officers, PCSO's, Community Safety staff and Neighbourhood Wardens.

The CSP hosted a Domestic Homicide learning event for professionals. The event focussed on the 2 reviews completed in 2016/17, sharing the process, outcome and learning to help inform future working. The event was well attended and received by a wide range of partner agencies.

Weeks of Action in priority locations have been held in Kings Heath, Briar Hill and Thorplands. The final Week of Action will be taking place in Semilong, week commencing 25/09/2017. All priority locations continue to be supported by a multiagency group post events, in order to continue to tackle identified issues and work with the local community.

Consultation has been completed on the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order for Marble Arch, Semilong. The outcome is that the 'Order' is fully supported. Subject to Cabinet approval, the PSPO will be put in place by no later than 30/10/2017.

We are also working on initiatives for Hate crime awareness week and events to cover 16 days of activism.

Councillor Anna King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety



Cabinet Member Report for Environment

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18 September 2017

Environmental Services Re-Provision of Contract

The project's main objective is to secure the new Environmental Services Contract for NBC from June 2018, when the contract with the current service provider expires.

Following a robust review of available commissioning options and the consequent approval of the Business Case and Procurement Strategy by Cabinet in January 2017, the project entered the procurement stage in February 2017, with the publication of the OJEU notice.

NBC elected to use the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation to undertake the procurement of the new contract.

After the completion of the selection stage, NBC issued the Invitation to Submit Initial Tenders to suitable candidates in May 2017. Initial Tenders were received in August 2017 and the evaluation panel, consisting of officers, legal and technical advisers, is currently undertaking the evaluation of the bids received.

We anticipate that the remaining stages of the project are implemented as planned. The Negotiation stage with remaining bidders will be undertaken during September and October 2017 and the Invitation to Submit Final Tenders will be issued in October 2017. Finally, Cabinet will consider the recommendation to award the new Environmental Services Contract to the preferred bidder at a future meeting in January 2018.

Environmental Services

New bollards have been installed at Thornton Park, Spring Park, Acre Lane and the Racecourse to help cut down on the number of unauthorised vehicles driving on to them. Further improvement works are planned at Abington Park and Kingsthorpe Recreation Ground and we are undertaking a review of access arrangements for all other parks and open spaces.

The new security fence has now been installed at Harlestone Road Allotment. The fence was required to protect the plot holders sheds, tools and themselves after a large number of break-ins and vandalism.

The new St Crispin Allotment is now up and running and an allotment committee has now been formed by the plot holders.

Two new footpaths have been installed to make access to the open spaces easier for users. The first one is off Conifer Rise and the other one is off the High Street to Cherry Orchard, Hardingstone.

Environmental Health

The provision of an environmental enforcement service is currently out to tender. It is planned that the service will begin operation later in the autumn.

The Low Emissions Strategy for Northampton is currently being finalised to take account of the results of the Public Consultation and input from Scrutiny Panel 4, whose recommendations were presented to the September Cabinet meeting.

Park Management Committees

Love Parks Week – coordination of the activities and promotion, across the Parks. Becketts, Eastfield, Abington and the Racecourse all joined in to promote the week by holding an event, including kite flying, health walks and litter picking.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment



Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18 September 2017

Town Centre Operations

The visitor parking numbers across the council's public car parks have been positive in the period April – July 2017 with usage increasing. For the period April to July 2017 in the council's multi-storey car parks the Saturday free parking figures show 149,751 customers taking advantage of the offer and for the two hour free parking offer the figures show 337,404 customers taking advantage with the Mayorhold and Grosvenor being the two most popular car parks. Overall parking figures for the period April – July 2017 show 904,209 visitors using the council's multi-storey and surface car parks.

The footfall figures for July show 1,468,323 visitors, workers and shoppers in Abington Street and Market Square which is a 6.7% fall in comparison with the same period in 2016.

Development Control

The Outline planning application (N/2016/1439) for the erection of 14 no. dwellings at the former Silver Cornet Public House site in Kings Heath was approved by the Planning Committee on 25th July.

The Planning application (N/2017/0757) for the development of additional car parking and lighting at Delapre Abbey was approved by the Planning Committee on 25th July.

The Planning application (N/2017/1097) for the development of 83 no. dwellings at the former Emmanuel Middle School site, Birds Hill Road, has recently been received.

The Planning appeal for application (N/2016/1073) for the development of up to 30 dwellings was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on 9th August, following refusal by the Planning Committee in August 2016.

The Application for the discharge of planning conditions in relation to the Masterplan and Design Code, Ecological Construction Method Statement and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan for the outline planning permission (N/2013/103)5 for the development of up to 1,000 dwellings at Northampton South SUE has recently been received.

The Planning application (N/2017/1029) for the demolition of existing dwellings and erection of 21 no. new affordable dwellings at Toms Close has been received at the beginning of August.

Planning Policy

Northampton Local Plan Part 2

The site assessment consultation will be considered by Cabinet on 13th September prior to the consultation commencing at the beginning of October

Property Assets

The negotiation of a number of new leases and assignments of existing leases have been completed.

The listing of Asset valuation information has been concluded

We have successfully completed the marketing of all the Council's vacant commercial units, which yielded good quality interest in all units. Heads of Terms are to be finalised prior to instructing solicitors.

Cabinet approved for the transfer of land at Bellinge to Billing Parish Council

Business Incentive Scheme

Grants to 16 new business have been approved this year to date leveraging over £800,000 in private sector investment and creating 52 jobs. This includes MOOCH on St. Giles Street, an independent gift shop, that won Muddy Stilettoe's Gift Shop of the Year Award only a few weeks after opening.

Upton

Phase 2 is now underway. The land transfer has been completed and topographical surveys commenced on 29th August 2017, to establish if current designs for pathways are appropriate. Tree surveys will follow on from this work.

Street Lighting

Lighting columns to be transferred back to NBC from NCC have been identified and will be reported to Cabinet on 13th October ahead of formal handover.

Northampton Castle area implementation

Castles in the air

This project is in its second year. 8 bird boxes with a castle theme were made by members of the Friends of Northampton Castle and painted by school children at a Northampton museum workshop event. They have been installed. I understand that the only resident of last year's boxes chose to build its nest on the roof of a 'castle'!
The virtual reality app project is proceeding, and will be underway and will be completed in the next few weeks.

Enterprise Zone

Successful Enterprise Zone tour carried out for the new lead at BEIS last week to show the progress made on our EZ and developments underway.

The Planning application has been submitted for the development for 4 new industrial units on site 7C Edgar Mobbs Ways with expected end users identified- Expected decision early September

Other Enterprise

A Planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the former Howard Smith Paper site on Brackmills with the view to develop a state of the art 200,000 sqft industrial unit.

8 investment enquires received this month for new businesses to move into Northampton.

Delapre Abbey

3 Weddings have now taken place at Delapre Abbey Woodhead, the main contractors, have completed snagging. Planning approval received for the car park development Planners have recommended the approval for CCTV cameras which are being taken to the September 5th committee

Abington Park Museum Refurbishment

The works completed on time and within budget.

St Crispin's Community Centre

The Tenancy at will signed between NBC and Community Spaces Northampton was completed in August.

The Licence between Community Spaces Northampton and Northampton Town football club to for 60 students to commence sports management studies first week in September, is now in place.

I will not be at the meeting. I return to Northampton on Monday 25th September and I will be happy to answer questions by email either prior to or immediately after my return

**Councillor Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning**



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18th September 2017

Revenues and Benefits

Revenues and Benefits performance remains on target for all key service areas. We team have recently upskilled our newest members of staff, of which has had a direct impact on the excellent performance and resilience within our Call Centre and our response rates to our customers. Our continued focus on supporting our most vulnerable customers has resulted in an increased number of new claims and Discretionary Housing Payments being processed within 24 hours.

Finance

There are three areas of focus currently in the Finance team.

Firstly, developing the Council's Efficiency Plan and developing the medium term financial plans. A report is being prepared for Cabinet in October which will reiterate the financial challenges facing the Council over the medium term and propose the adoption of some guiding financial principles in achieving a balanced financial position. To this end work has been ongoing for a number of months developing options.

Secondly, understanding the financial position of the increased demand being experienced in Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation budget. As noted in the Finance Report Cabinet this is placing pressure on the forecast outturn for the current financial year and there are a number of mitigating actions being implemented to manage the financial pressure.

Thirdly, the finance team are working with the External Auditor, KPMG, to finalise the Accounts for 2016/17. These are planned to be presented to Audit Committee on 27th September.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance

Appendices: 0



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
18th September 2017

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Customers and Communities

Report Title	Delegation and Appointment to the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Council to delegate the delivery of the Authorities' statutory billing, collection, enforcement and benefits service to the newly formed Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee and
- 1.2 To seek the confirmation from Council to appoint a member of the Council to represent Northampton Borough Council (NBC) on the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approves:
- 2.2 The delegation of its statutory billing, collection, enforcement and benefits service to the newly formed Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee and note that this change will be amended in the NBC constitution.
- 2.3 The appointment of Councillor Brandon Eldred, Cabinet Member for Finance to represent the Council on the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 At the Cabinet Meeting dated 7th December 2016, it was agreed that the Council enter into a new Joint Committee Arrangement.

- 3.1.2 Responsibility for the signing of the agreement was delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.
- 3.1.3 The Delegation and Joint Committee Agreement has been independently reviewed and the recommendations provided, as part of this review, included as part of the final agreement.
- 3.1.4 The Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee provides that NBC and Milton Keynes Council (MKC) shall appoint one Member each (being elected members of those Councils) as their nominated Members of the Joint Committee. Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) shall appoint one Member who will be either a Member of CCC or a Member of NCC, who is also a Member of the LGSS Joint Committee (The LGSS Member) as their nominated Member of the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.
- 3.1.5 The three Members appointed shall have full voting rights.

3.2 Decision details

- 3.2.1 The appointment of Cllr Brandon Eldred, Cabinet Member for Finance as the member of the Council to represent NBC on the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.
- 3.2.2 The delegation of the statutory Billing Authority and Administration of Housing Benefit responsibilities which had previously been made to the LGSS Joint Committee to be re-delegated to the new Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 There are no policy implications arising. The Revenues and Benefits services are both statutory services and will continue to be delivered in compliance with legislative requirements.
- 4.1.2 It is a statutory responsibility of NBC to deliver the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates as a billing Authority.
- 4.1.3 In addition NBC has a statutory responsibility for the administration of Housing Benefit.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 An independent financial review was undertaken in relation to the formation of the Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The Council is required to formally appoint members to the Joint Committee to enable full representation and the lawful operation of the Joint Committee.

4.3.2 Independent legal advice has been sought regarding the Partnership Delegation Agreement and the operation of the Joint Committee.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 None

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 None

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

**Report Author
Marion Goodman
Head of Customer and Cultural Services
Directorate: Customer and Communities
0300 330 7000**

Appendices: 2



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

18 SEPTEMBER 2017

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Borough Secretary

Report Title	Independent Remuneration Panel – Members’ Allowances
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Council’s approval to amend the Council’s current Scheme of Members’ Allowances to take into account the recommendations received from the Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider the following recommendations received from the Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel, as detailed in the Report at **Appendix 1** and the supplementary Report of the Panel at **Appendix 2**, that:

- a) the Basic Allowance, of £6,692.26 per annum, remains unaltered;
- b) the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Leader of the Council is set at £17,227.74 per annum;
- c) the annual SRAs for positions receiving an SRA be maintained at the same percentage level of the Leader’s SRA:
 - Deputy Leader (60%)
 - Cabinet Member (55%)
 - Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (35%)
 - Leader of the Main Opposition Party (35%)
 - Chair of the Planning Committee (30%)
 - Chair of the Licensing Committee (30%)
 - Leader of the Third Group (20%)
 - Councillors appointed to the West Northants Strategic Planning Committee (10%);
- d) the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Standards Committee be set at 15% of the Leader’s SRA;

- e) the Co-Optee allowance for the Independent Chair of Audit Committee is set at £4306.94 per annum;
- f) any Independent Members or Parish Councillor Members co-opted onto the Standards Committee receive a co-optees allowance of £500 each per annum;
- g) all the allowances as recommended are indexed at a rate of 1% for 2017/2018;
- h) the recommended Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances and Co-optees' Allowances be index linked to any salary increases for Northampton Borough Council Officers at grade 5 of the organisation's Pay Scales and that such indexation continues until the next review of the IRP, or for a period of four years, whichever is the sooner;
- i) the Constitution is amended to reflect the policy that, where Councillors hold more than one position of special responsibility, only one SRA (the higher amount) may be claimed;
- j) the Councillors' Travelling Allowance, Guidance for Members, draft version 4, February 2017 (as at **Annex B of Appendix 1**) be approved;
- k) no change is made to the Dependants' Carers Allowance Scheme; and
- l) these recommendations take effect from **May 2017**.

2.2 To amend the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme to reflect the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as detailed in its reports at **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

2.3 To delegate authority to the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer to:

- a) make the necessary changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme in the Council's Constitution to reflect Council's decision, to include the full schedule of rates and allowances and terms and conditions; and
- b) make arrangements for the publicity that the Council is required to undertake in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations) put in place a framework for the preparation, requirements and administration of Schemes for the payment of allowances to Members.

3.1.2 Part 4 of the Regulations makes provision in respect of the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel whose functions are to make recommendations concerning Members' allowances.

3.1.3 The Council established an Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) in August 2016 with the following remit:

To formulate a view and make recommendations to the Council of the kind set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 namely:-

- (a) as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which the following should be available-*
 - (i) special responsibility allowance;*
 - (ii) travelling and subsistence allowance; and*
 - (iii) co-optees' allowance;*
- (b) as to the amount of such allowances and as to the amount of basic allowance;*
- (c) as to whether dependants' carers' allowance should be payable to members of the authority, and as to the amount of such an allowance;*
- (d) as to whether, in the event that the Scheme is amended at any time so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, payment of allowances may be backdated to apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made;*
- (e) as to whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years, before its application is reviewed;*

and to make recommendations in respect of any other matter reasonably referred to the IRP.

3.1.4 Subsequent to the Panel undertaking its original review between August 2016 and March 2017, it was asked to look at two further issues:

- To consider the payment of and (if applicable) amount of allowance for an Independent co-opted Chair of the Council's Audit Committee.
- To consider the payment of and (if applicable) amount of allowance for Independent Members and Parish Councillor Members co-opted to the Council's Standards Committee.

3.1.5 A mini review was undertaken by the Panel in May 2017. [As Full Council has since the conclusion of the mini-review formally agreed to change the composition of the Audit Committee to have an independent co-opted Chair, rather than a Councillor Chair, the recommendation of the IRP in their original report regarding a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Audit Committee has fallen away. In its place, is the recommendation of the IRP in its supplementary Report (at Appendix 2) regarding a Co-optees allowance for an independent co-opted Chair of Audit Committee.]

3.2 Decision details

3.2.1 The Panel having been constituted, has now concluded its review of Northampton Borough Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and has prepared a Report. The Panel's Report explains how it undertook their review, details the information it considered and sets out its recommendations in relation to the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel's Report is at **Appendix 1**. The Panel's supplementary report arising from conclusion of its mini review in May 2017 is at **Appendix 2**.

3.2.2 Full Council is asked to consider the Panel's recommendations.

3.2.3 The recommendation of this report is that the Panel's recommendations should be accepted and incorporated into the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme in the Constitution.

3.2.4 The decision as to whether the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme should be amended, as recommended by the Panel's Report, is a matter for Full Council. However, Regulation 19 of the 2003 Regulations, states that before Council makes or amends a Scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an Independent Remuneration Panel. Full Council therefore has a legal duty to have regard to the Panel's recommendations.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The Council has discretion as to whether or not it accepts any of the recommendations proposed in the Panel's Report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 If the recommendations of the Panel are accepted the allowances payable for the municipal year 2017/18 would be as follows:

Allowance	Number of Recipients	Recommended Amount	Proposed Percentage of Leader's SRA	With 1% indexation (Paid 17/18)
Basic Allowance	45	6692.26	N/A	6759.18
SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES				
Leader's SRA	1	17227.74	N/A	17400.02
Deputy Leader's SRA	1	10,336.64	60%	10440.01
Cabinet Member	5	9475.26	55%	9570.01
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	1	6029.71	35%	6090
Leader of the Main Opposition	1	6029.71	35%	6090
Chair of the Planning Committee	1	5168.32	30%	5220
Chair of the Licensing Committee	1	5168.32	30%	5220
Leader of the Third Group	1	3445.55	20%	3480.01
Councillor appointed to the West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee	4	1722.77	10%	1740
Chair of Standards Committee	1	2584.16	15%	2610
CO-OPTEE'S ALLOWANCES				
Independent Co-opted Chair of Audit Committee	1	4306.94	N/A	4350.01
Parish Councillor Co-optee to Standards Committee	2	500	N/A	£505
Independent Member Co-optee to Standards Committee	2*	500	N/A	£505
TOTALS:				£421,893.20

As shown in the Budgetary Implications section and Summary of Recommendations table in the Panel's supplementary Report at Appendix 2, this would equate to a net increase of £8,809.30 from the current municipal year.

4.2.2 Whilst Council has discretion to resolve to make alterations to the Members' Allowances Scheme different to those recommended by the Panel, it has a duty to have regard to the recommendations of the Panel in doing so. Members should give thorough consideration to the recommendations of the Panel in full Council to achieve compliance with this duty.

4.2.3 Regulation 10(4) of the Regulations permits a Members' Allowance Scheme to make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to an index. Regulation 10(5) provides that an authority must not rely on such an index for a period of longer than four years before seeking a further recommendation from the Panel.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The Council must establish an Independent Remuneration Panel whose function is to make recommendations to the Council concerning allowances payable to Members. The Council must have regard to the Panel's recommendations prior to amending or making a Members' Allowances Scheme.

4.3.2 Regulation 16 of the 2003 Regulations states that after receiving a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel which sets out the Panel's recommendations, local authorities must ensure that copies of the report are available for inspection at their principal office at all reasonable hours. Local authorities must also, as soon as reasonably practicable after they receive the report, publish a notice which:

- a) states that the authority has received recommendations from an Independent Panel in respect of its scheme of allowances;
- b) describes the main features of the Panel's recommendations including the amounts of allowances that the Panel has recommended should be payable to Members;
- c) states that copies of the Panel's report are available at the authority's principal office and specifies the address of the principal office.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 The proposals are considered to have a neutral impact in terms of equality issues.

4.4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 None specifically.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel to Northampton Borough Council

1. Introduction

1.1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 put in practice a consolidated and simplified framework for allowances that covers Principal Councils and Parish and Town Councils.

1.2. Part 4 of the Regulations makes provision for the establishment of an Independent Panel to make recommendations concerning Allowances. It is for you as a Council to determine your Allowances Scheme but you do have a legal duty to take account of our recommendations.

1.3. Our Panel comprises John Cade (Chairman), Ron Dean, Jim Gammans and Cara Manchester. Previously Director of Scrutiny with Birmingham City Council, John is now a member of the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Birmingham and also chairs several other Independent Remuneration Panels. Ron is a Justice of the Peace, Jim works for Age UK Northampton as a Trading Products Co-Ordinator. Jim graduated from the University of Northampton with a Marketing and Business Studies degree and Cara is an experienced Chartered Accountant and works for a Northampton based company. They are also experienced in Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) work as they serve on Northamptonshire County Council's Panel.

2. Way of Working

2.1. The Panel's activity fell into four areas:

- a) A comprehensive review of the background and contextual information on Northampton Borough Council, focussing on changes which have taken place since the Council's last full review in 2008.
- b) Taking evidence from Councillors and the Chief Executive of the Council.
- c) A review of the oral and written submissions.
- d) Agreeing unanimous recommendations by the four Panel Members.

2.2. It was very important to us that as many Councillors as possible had the opportunity to submit evidence. Every Councillor was given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire, submit written evidence or give evidence in person to the Panel itself.

2.3. 11 Councillors completed a questionnaire and 15 Councillors gave oral evidence to us. We also received 2 e-mails from Councillors. This was invaluable to us in gaining an overall picture of Councillors' feelings on the matter of allowances.

2.4. As in normal practice, we also took evidence from your Chief Executive.

2.5. In our work we received excellent support from Francis Fernandes, Marianne McCarthy and Tracy Tiff. We would particularly like to thank Tracy for assembling the amount of comparative and supporting information she provided for us.

3. Context

3.1. Your last review of Members' Allowances took place in 2008 with decisions being taken at your 27th October 2008 Council meeting.

3.2. At your Council meeting on 19th May 2011 full Council took the decision that there be no increase for the life of the Council in any of the allowances paid to Councillors.

3.3. The Panel was formally set up in August 2016 with the following remit:

To formulate a view and make recommendations to the Council of the kind set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 namely:-

- (a) *as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which the following should be available-*
 - (i) *special responsibility allowance;*
 - (ii) *travelling and subsistence allowance; and*
 - (iii) *co-optees' allowance;*
- (b) *as to the amount of such allowances and as to the amount of basic allowance;*
- (c) *as to whether dependants' carers' allowance should be payable to members of the authority, and as to the amount of such an allowance;*
- (d) *as to whether, in the event that the Scheme is amended at any time so as to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, payment of allowances may be backdated to apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made;*
- (e) *as to whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index*

should apply, subject to a maximum of four years, before its application is reviewed;

and to make recommendations in respect of any other matter reasonably referred to the IRP.

3.4. Before we get into our specific proposals we wanted to make two general observations:

3.5. Atypical Nature of Northampton Borough Council

Firstly, an important context for our deliberations is that your Council is not a “typical” district council in a couple of important ways. You are by far and away the largest district council in terms of population and net revenue spend. And then your “growth agenda” both economically and demographically is significant. We were, therefore, very mindful that when we looked at comparative information for other Councils the demands on Northampton Councillors were often higher than more typical district Councils.

3.6. Broad Spectrum of Views on Allowances

Secondly, the evidence we took showed a full gamut of views on allowances. Opinions expressed to us ranged from “allowances are distorting the voluntary/community service role of Councillors” to, “if we are going to attract able people to become Councillors we must provide higher allowances”. Similarly, “now is not the right time to make any increase, particularly with “cuts” across the Council” to “we cannot have a permanent freeze”.

3.7. In our recommendations we have sought to make balanced judgements on these matters.

4. Findings

4.1. Basic Allowance

The majority of the evidence we received was that the basic allowance of £6,692.26 was about right and should not be increased. We share this view following our examination of the comparative information that was provided to us.

4.2. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

a) Leader’s Allowance

Similar to many other Councils, the structure of your SRAs is based on percentages of the SRA agreed for the Leader of the Council. The

determination of the Leader's allowance is, therefore, particularly significant.

We looked at what your previous 2008 review had said and found this passage:

“There is also a consensus that the Panel supports, that the post of Leader is close to being a full time equivalent, regardless of the individual in situ. The median annual salary for all FTEs within the Northampton Borough Council area was £23,088 in 2007, which the Panel feels is a justifiable, defensible and transparent figure upon which to base the Leader's total remuneration package. By deducting the recommended Basic Allowance of £6,625 from £23,088 it produces a tentative recommended SRA of £16,463”.

We take the view that it is very important to have “an anchor” for explaining to the public how the Leader's SRA (and consequently the other SRAs) is determined. We share the view of the previous Panel that basing the Leader's SRA on the median annual salary for all FTEs within the Northampton Borough council area makes sense.

We, therefore, asked what the current median annual salary is and have been informed that it is £23,920¹. This is an increase of just £832 from the 2007/2008 median salary. We believe this modest increase should be applied so that the important link with comparators is maintained. This would mean that the Leader's SRA would be £17,227.74, (ie. £23,920 minus the current Basic Allowance of £6,692.26.)

b) Other Special Responsibility Allowances

i) Having regard to the evidence we received, we believe the relevant percentages of the Leader's allowance:

- **Deputy Leader (60%)**
- **Cabinet Member (55%)**
- **Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (35%)**
- **Leader of Main Opposition Party (35%)**
- **Chair of Planning (30%)**
- **Chair of Licensing (30%)**
- **Leader of the Third Group (20%)**
- **West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (10%)**

remain appropriate and should stay unchanged.

¹ Source of data: Office of National Statistics <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc126/>

- ii) We do believe that there is a case for increasing the SRA to the **Chair of Audit Committee** from 20% to 25% of the SRA of the Leader. This would increase to £4,306.94 from £3,408.75. The role of the Audit Committee has, in recent years, become more important for many Councils with enhanced responsibility for the Chair. We attach the Role and Terms of Reference of the Committee and feel this justifies an increase, particularly due to the responsibility for approving the Annual Statement of Accounts.
- iii) With regard to the SRA for the **Chair of Standards Committee**, we believe that, since this post is now drawn from Councillors as opposed to being a co-opted post it should also be a percentage of the Leader's allowance. We believe this should be 15% which equates to an increase of £554.16 pa from its current figure of £2,000. This modest increase we feel is justified by the responsibility of the post.
- iv) The only remaining SRA we need to refer to is that which relates to **Councillors appointed to the West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee**. It is currently 10% of the Leader's Allowance. We were advised that the role of the West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee was in transition.
- v) There is nothing unlawful or wrong about paying a Councillor more than one SRA for roles within the same Council but it is a practice which is diminishing. Most Independent Remuneration Panels recommend that only one SRA can be claimed by those Members who hold different roles, each of which has an SRA entitlement.

Moreover, the Council's Constitution is silent about whether or not more than one SRA may be claimed by a Councillor. Guidance on your web-site suggests only one SRA can be claimed.

The Panel therefore recommends that you introduce the policy that only one SRA can be claimed by those Members who hold different roles, each of which has an SRA entitlement.

This will mean that a similar level of budget provision will not need to be made for this in the future.

5. Index Linking

You have previously provided for index linking of allowances coupled to any increases awarded to Northampton Borough Council employees. We believe that it is important to restore this index-linking. It is therefore recommended that the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances are index

linked to any increases awarded to Northampton Borough Council employees at Grade 5 of the organisation's Pay Scale.

This will provide that both the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances increase at an appropriate rate and prevent periodic "catch-up" lump proposals which are more difficult for the public to understand. This index linking takes effect from the May 2017 Annual General meeting of full Council until the next review of the IRP, or for a period of four years, whichever is the sooner.

6. Whips

In the course of our evidence taking, the role of Group Whips and whether they should receive an allowance was raised with us. Reference was also made to Northamptonshire County Council's (NCC) practice of paying an allowance to their Group Business Managers. We have seen the role descriptions for these NCC posts and are satisfied that they indicate a role quite different from that carried out by the Whips in NBC. We therefore, will not be recommending any change to the current practice of viewing the Whip as a Party-Political post and not receiving an SRA.

7. Assistant Cabinet Members

We were also asked to consider the possibility of an allowance for the post of Assistant Cabinet Members. Whilst Cabinet Members cannot delegate decision making to an Assistant Cabinet Member, we recognise the value – particularly for succession planning - of having such posts.

However, before any recommendation on an allowance can be made there needs to be a job description for the role and some evidence on how this is working out in practice.

8. Travel and Subsistence

We were made aware of the draft Guidance Notes for Members on Travelling Allowances. We attach a copy of this Guidance to our report. We believe this properly covers travel arrangements.

We therefore recommend that the Councillors' Travelling Allowance, Guidance for Members, draft version 4, February 2017 as attached is taken to full Council for approval.

9. Dependants' Carers Allowance Scheme

The Dependants' Carers Allowance provides reimbursement for care up to a maximum of 15% of the Basic Allowance per annum with the claim accepted upon receipt of a "self-declaration" made by the Councillor.

Some Councillors believed that this allowance can only be paid for dependent children but the Council's Constitution (Part 6, 6 – 3) is clear that the allowance "will be paid to those Councillors who incur expenditure for the care of dependent relatives or children whilst undertaking Approved Duties".

We see no reason to make any recommendation for changes to the scheme, but suggest that it would be helpful in situations where a Councillor intends to make a claim, if they give some advance notice to the relevant Officer as soon as practicable.

10. Budget Pressures

As a Panel we are very mindful of the budget pressures faced by the Council. Indeed, many Councillors in their evidence to us made the point that "we are all in this together" and we cannot be awarding ourselves increases when most of the residents within the Borough are seeing little, if no, increase in their take home pay.

Reference was also made to the increased working hours, with no additional pay for NBC staff.

We are therefore keen to limit any budget impact having full regard to our recommendations and the index linking. If our recommendations are accepted this will mean a net increase in your 2017/2018 Municipal year budget of £6,789.30.

Summary of Recommendations

Allowance	Number of Recipients	Current Amount (Paid 16/17)	Current Percentage of Leader's SRA	Recommended Amount	Proposed Percentage of Leader's SRA	With 1% indexation (Paid 17/18)
Basic Allowance	45	6692.26	N/A	6692.26	N/A	6759.18
Leader's SRA	1	17043.75	N/A	17227.74	N/A	17400.02
Deputy Leader's SRA	1	10226.25	60%	10,336.64	60%	10440.01
Cabinet Member	5	9374.06	55%	9475.26	55%	9570.01
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	1	5965.31	35%	6029.71	35%	6090
Leader of the Main Opposition	1	5965.31	35%	6029.71	35%	6090
Chair of the Planning Committee	1	5113.13	30%	5168.32	30%	5220
Chair of the Licensing Committee	1	5113.13	30%	5168.32	30%	5220
Chair of the Audit Committee	1	3408.75	20%	4306.94	25%	4350.01
Leader of the Third Group	1	3408.75	20%	3445.55	20%	3480.01
Councillor appointed to the West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee	4	1704.38	10%	1722.77	10%	1740
Chair of Standards Committee	1	2000	N/A	2584.16	15%	2610
TOTALS:		£413,083.90				£419,873.20

11. Recommendations

The IRP recommends to Full Council:

11.1 That in accordance with the financial schedule shown in section 10 above:

- a) the Basic Allowance remain unaltered.
- b) the “anchor” for the Leader’s SRA to the median annual salary for all Full Time Equivalent workers within the Northampton Borough Council area be restored.
- c) with the exception of the Chair of the Audit Committee, the SRAs for all other positions receiving an SRA be maintained at the same percentage level of the Leader’s SRA.
- d) the SRA for the Chair of Audit Committee be increased from 20% to 25% of the Leader’s SRA.
- e) the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Standards Committee be set at 15% of the Leader’s SRA.
- f) that the index-linking of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances be linked to any salary increases for Northampton Borough Council Officers at grade 5 of the organisation’s Pay Scales and that such indexation continues until the next review of the IRP, or for a period of four years, whichever is the sooner.

11.2 That no change be made to the Dependants’ Carers Allowance Scheme.

11.3 That the Constitution is amended to reflect the policy that, where Councillors hold more than one position of special responsibility, only one SRA (the higher amount) may be claimed.

11.4 That the Councillors’ Travelling Allowance, Guidance for Members, draft version 4, February 2017 be approved.

11.5 That all of these recommendations take effect from the May 2017 Annual General Meeting of full Council.

John Cade

Chair, Independent Remuneration Panel

Article 9 – The Audit Committee

9.1 The Audit Committee

The Council will establish an Audit Committee:

9.2 **Membership:** The Audit Committee will be composed of seven Councillors, excluding members of the Cabinet.

The Committee shall have delegated powers to appoint co-opted members, without voting rights but with expertise in relevant areas.

9.3 Role and Terms of Reference

9.3.1 To generally consider all relevant processes for risk, control and governance.

9.3.2 To approve and influence (but not direct) internal audit's strategy, plan and performance.

9.3.3 To review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.

9.3.4 To consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies.

9.3.5 To consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti fraud and anti corruption arrangements and seek assurances that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.

9.3.6 To be satisfied that the Council's assurance statements, including the Statement on Internal Control, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it.

9.3.7 To ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.

- 9.3.8 To review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to Members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.
- 9.3.9 To monitor, the implementation of Key recommendations and actions arising from the Council's Improvement Plan.
- 9.3.10 To consider key performance management reports and monitor the effectiveness of performance against the Best Value Performance Plan and key outcomes in the Council's Improvement Plan.
- 9.3.11 To promote relevant value for money studies following particular themes or service areas as appropriate.
- 9.3.12 To approve the Annual Statement of Accounts for submission to the External Auditor and for public consultation and to subsequently approve their adoption.
- 9.3.13 To ensure effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies.

9.4 Rules of Procedure

The Council Procedure Rules contained in Part 4 of this Constitution shall apply insofar as they do not conflict with the rules herein.



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL COUNCILLOR TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

DRAFT Version 4 – February 2017

A basic, flat rate allowance is payable to all Councillors. The rate for 2015/16 is £6,692.26 per annum. This allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all Councillors, including such calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents, preparing for and attending all formal and informal meetings they are invited to and being accessible and available to all residents in their ward. . It also covers incidental costs such as the use of Councillors' homes.

Details of the Members' Allowances Scheme are can be located within the Council's [Constitution - Part 6 - Members' Allowance Scheme](#).

Travelling Allowances

Travelling allowances are payable to Councillors to reimburse them for costs incurred in carrying out certain Council duties. These duties are known as 'approved duties', examples of approved duties include:

- Attending meetings of full Council and of Committees/Scrutiny Panels etc. to which Councillors have been appointed.
- Attending meetings of outside bodies to which Councillors have been appointed to represent Northampton Borough Council
- Attending a Councillor Development Session.

- Attending an out of town Council approved duty such as a site visit for a Scrutiny Panel

Travel allowance rates shall be in line with the HMRC approved rates and should only rise in accordance with any increase in the HMRC rates.

The following HMRC travel allowance rates are currently payable:

- 45 pence per mile for cars
- 24 pence per mile for motor-cycles
- 20 pence per mile for bicycles

Actual costs of rail, taxi, bus fares and other direct costs can also be claimed.

Mileage is not payable for attendance, for example, at Political Group meetings, meetings with constituents, constituency activity or informal site visits.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you can claim mileage, please contact Democratic Services for advice, ideally before you make the journey.

Subsistence and Overnight Subsistence

The HMRC benchmark scale rates for subsistence that apply from 6 April 2009 are as follows:

Description	Amount (up to)
Breakfast rate	£5
One meal (5 hour) rate	£5
Two meal (10 hour) rate	£10
Late evening meal rate	£15

Breakfast rate - The rate may be paid where a Councillor leaves home earlier than usual, and before 6.00 am, and incurs a cost on breakfast taken away from his home after the qualifying journey for an approved duty has started. If a Councillor usually leaves before 6.00 am the breakfast rate does not apply.

Late evening meal rate - The rate may be paid where the Councillor has to attend an approved duty later than usual, after 8.00 pm, having worked his normal day and has to buy a meal before the qualifying journey ends which he would usually have at home.

The breakfast and late evening meal rates are for use in exceptional circumstances only.

One meal (5 hour) rate - The rate may be paid where the Councillor has been undertaking qualifying travel for a period of at least 5 hours and has incurred the cost of a meal.

Two meal (10 hour) rate - The rate may be paid where the Councillor has been undertaking qualifying travel for a period of at least 10 hours and has incurred the cost of a meal or meals.

HMRC guidance: Benchmark scale rate payments must be limited to three meal rates on one day or 24 hour period. A meal is defined as a combination of food and drink* and would take a normal dictionary meaning.

Overnight subsistence rate – HMRC has not set a benchmark rate for overnight subsistence. It is necessary for any overnight accommodation bookings to be agreed in advance with the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer and the accommodation booked by Officers of the Council for the Councillor.

A Councillor can only be reimbursed for a meal once. If the cost of an evening meal or breakfast is reimbursed on an actual basis, because it is included in the cost of an overnight stay, the Councillor would not also be entitled to the benchmark rate for breakfast or late evening meal.

ALL claims for travel and subsistence must be submitted within three months of the expense being incurred. (This means claims may only be submitted in respect of the current month and the two previous months).

Income Tax, National Insurance and benefits

The basic and special allowance is subject to income tax and national insurance as earnings from the office held.

Reimbursement of certain expenses (including fares, accommodation and subsistence) actually incurred may have no liability for Tax and National Insurance provided that receipts are provided. In terms of mileage, however, it is necessary for Councillors to declare the amount of allowance they receive if they are drawing any state benefit.

Each year, the Council is required to publish details of the allowances paid to each Councillor during the previous financial year. These details are published on the [website](#).

** Non alcoholic drinks*

Appendix to the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Mini Review

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We undertook a mini Review on 24 May 2017. The Panel, for this mini Review, comprised John Cade (Chair), Ron Dean and Cara Manchester.
- 1.2 Subsequent to us undertaking our original review between August 2016 and March 2017 we were asked to look at two further issues:
 - To consider the payment of and (if applicable) amount of allowance for an Independent co-opted Chair of the Council's Audit Committee.
 - To consider the payment of and (if applicable) amount of allowance for Independent Members and Parish Councillor Members to the Council's Standards Committee.

2 Independent co-opted Chair of the Audit Committee

- 2.1 Background information was provided to us. We were advised that the Audit Committee and Full Council were due to consider a proposal that the composition of Audit Committee be altered to provide for an independent co-opted Chair of Audit Committee to be appointed, instead of an elected Member chairing this Committee. We were advised that our views and recommendations as to the remuneration of an Independent Chair of Audit Committee were being sought in advance of a decision being made.
- 2.2 We noted that the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee would not be changed as a result of any such change to the composition of the Audit Committee and that the Independent Chair would have the same responsibilities as the previous Councillor Chair.
- 2.3 Whilst it has no legal requirement, the IRP acknowledged the guidance on New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulations for Local Authority Allowances which states *"2.2 where either a co-opted or an appointed member is appointed chair of the Committee on which they are co-opted or appointed, the co-optees' allowance they receive must be of an amount no less than the equivalent special responsibility allowance being made available to chairs of equivalent committees of the Council."*
- 2.4 For the reasons set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above, we therefore take the view that it would only be fair and equitable for an Independent co-opted Chair of the Audit Committee to be remunerated at the same level to that which the IRP recommended in its original report as a suitable special

responsibility allowance in respect of a Chair of the Audit Committee who is an elected Member of the Council - (recommendation 11.1.d and paragraph 4.2 b)ii) of our original report refer).

3 Co-optees to the Standards Committee

- 3.1 Background information was provided to us. The Council's Constitution makes provision for the co-option to the Council's Standards Committee of two Parish Councillors and such Independent Members as the Committee considers appropriate. We were informed that a recruitment process is underway as there are currently no co-optees on the Standards Committee. Whether such co-optees should receive remuneration and the level of such remuneration should be considered by us.
- 3.2 We noted that the Council also has two Statutory Independent Persons appointed pursuant to provisions in the Localism Act 2011. These statutory Independent Persons are not members of the Standards Committee, but have a number of specific functions in relation to standards casework (that is a complaint has been made about a Councillor). The statutory Independent Persons each receives an amount of £500 per year.
- 3.3 We considered the roles that the independent and Parish Councillor co-optees to the Committee will undertake and recognised the importance of the contributions they will make. We compared these co-optee roles to the role undertaken by the statutory Independent Persons and is of the opinion that the co-optees to the Standards Committee should be remunerated to the same level as the statutory Independent Persons.

4 Indexation

It is recommended that the co-optees' allowances are index linked to any increases awarded to Northampton Borough Council employees at Grade 5 of the organisations' Pay Scale. This index linking takes effect from the May 2017 AGM of full Council, until the next review of the IRP, or for a period of 4 years, whichever is the sooner. The reasoning for recommending indexation for these allowances is the same as the reasoning set out in relation to the Basic Allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances. Paragraph 5 of our original report refers.

5 Budgetary Implications

- 5.1 In our original report, we stated that if our recommendations were accepted, this would mean a net increase in the 2017/18 municipal year budget of £6,789.30. If the recommendations in this Appendix are accepted, this would cost an additional £2,020 per annum (with 1% indexation for 17/18 taken into account) should the Standards Committee appoint two Parish Councillor Co-optees and two Independent Member Co-optees (i.e. 4 x £505), meaning a total budgetary difference of £6,789.30 + £2020 (ie. £8,809.30).

Summary of Recommendations

Allowance	Number of Recipients	Current Amount(Paid 16/17)	Current Percentage of Leader's SRA	Recommended Amount	Proposed Percentage of Leader's SRA	With 1% indexation (Paid 17/18)
Basic Allowance	45	6692.26	N/A	6692.26	N/A	6759.18
Leader's SRA	1	17043.75	N/A	17227.74	N/A	17400.02
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Cabinet Member	5	9374.06	55%	9475.26	55%	9570.01
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny	1	5965.31	35%	6029.71	35%	6090
Leader of the Main Opposition	1	5965.31	35%	6029.71	35%	6090
Chair of the Planning Committee	1	5113.13	30%	5168.32	30%	5220
Chair of the Licensing Committee	1	5113.13	30%	5168.32	30%	5220
Chair of the Audit Committee	0	3408.75	20%			
Leader of the Third Group	1	3408.75	20%	3445.55	20%	3480.01
Councillor appointed to the West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee	4	1704.38	10%	1722.77	10%	1740
Chair of Standards Committee	1	2000	N/A	2584.16	15%	2610
Additional recommendations following the Mini Review of the IRP						
Independent Co-opted Chair of Audit Committee	1	N/A	N/A	4306.94	N/A	4350.01
Parish Councillor Co-optee to Standards Committee	2	N/A	N/A	500	N/A	£505
Independent Member Co-optee to Standards Committee	2*	N/A	N/A	500	N/A	£505
TOTALS:		£413,083.90				£421,893.20

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Panel recommends to full Council that:

- a) An Independent Chair of the Audit Committee should receive a co-optees allowance of £4,306.94 per annum.

(This recommendation supersedes recommendation 11.1.d of the original report of the IRP in the event that the Council alters the composition of the Audit Committee to provide for an Independent Chair).

- b) Any Independent Members or Parish Councillor Members co-opted onto the Standards Committee should receive a co-optees allowance of £500 each per annum.
- c) The co-optees' allowances referred to in paragraphs 6.1a) and 6.1b) above be index linked to any salary increases for Northampton Borough Council Officers at grade 5 of the organisation's Pay Scales and that such indexation continues until the next review of the IRP or for a period of 4 years whichever is the sooner.
- d) These recommendations take effect from the May 2017 Annual General Meeting of Full Council.

John Cade

Chair, Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendices: 0



COUNCIL

18 SEPTEMBER 2017

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Chief Executive

Report Title	Independent Chair of the Audit Committee
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Council's approval for an Independent Chair to be appointed to the Audit Committee to take into account the recommendations received from the Council's Audit Committee and to make relevant changes to the Constitution.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the composition of the Audit Committee be altered to provide that the Chair of Audit Committee will be an independent, non-voting, co-opted member and will be in addition to seven elected Members, and that the necessary amendments are made to the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2 That authority be delegated to the Borough Secretary & Monitoring Officer the powers needed to determine a recruitment process in consultation with Members, necessary to enable it to co-opt an independent person onto the Audit Committee so as to enhance its performance of its functions.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

Proposal to have an Independent Chair of Audit Committee

- 3.1.1 The Audit Committee is responsible for considering and monitoring processes for risk, control and governance as set out in further detail in Article 9 of the Council's Constitution. The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance and to support strong financial management and good governance.

- 3.1.2 In order to strengthen its overall governance framework and to address recommendations following an internal audit review, the Council is currently implementing a Governance Action Plan, as detailed in a report to the Audit Committee on 5th December 2016.
- 3.1.3 As reported to Audit Committee on 5th December 2016, one of the keys to the success of the Governance Action Plan has been identified as *“enhancements to the role of the Audit Committee in overseeing compliance with policies, procedures and agreed audit recommendations within the Council”*. As part of this, it is necessary to first consider the composition of the Audit Committee, to ensure that it is well equipped to perform its current role and any enhancements to it.
- 3.1.4 The Audit Committee, at its meeting on 3 July 2017, resolved:
- “That it be recommended to Full Council that the composition of the Audit Committee is altered to provide that the Chair of Audit Committee would be an independent, non-voting, co-opted member and would be in addition to seven elected Members, and that the necessary amendments be made to the Council’s Constitution.”*
- 3.1.5 Article 9 of the Constitution sets out the composition of the Audit Committee:
- “The Audit Committee will be composed of seven Councillors, excluding members of the Cabinet.*
- The Committee shall have delegated powers to appoint co-opted members, without voting rights but with expertise in relevant areas”.*
- 3.1.6 Currently therefore, the Committee is made up of a Chair who is a Councillor and six other Councillor members. There are no co-opted (as opposed to elected) members on the Committee at present.
- 3.1.7 It is proposed that the Chair of Audit Committee should be an independent co-optee, (rather than an elected member of the Council) and that Full Council should be recommended to approve this change to the Committee’s composition. The independent co-opted Chair would be in addition to seven elected Members (and any other non-voting co-opted Members with expertise in relevant areas appointed by the Committee under delegated powers).
- 3.1.8 There are no statutory requirements that determine the composition of the Council’s Audit Committee meaning it would be permissible to have an independent co-opted Chair.
- 3.1.9 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has set out its view of best practice for Audit Committees in local authorities in a publication entitled, *‘Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police – 2013 Edition’* (the ‘CIPFA Guidance’).
- 3.1.10 CIPFA notes that co-option of independent members may be beneficial to an Audit Committee. CIPFA has identified some of the reasons that local authorities have chosen to recruit independent members, including:

To bring additional knowledge and expertise to the Committee.
 To reinforce the political neutrality and independence of the Committee.

3.1.11 The CIPFA guidance also outlines some potential pitfalls to the use of independent members, including:

Over-reliance on independent members by other committee members can lead to a lack of engagement across the full Committee.
Lack of organisation knowledge or 'context' among independent members when considering risk registers or audit reports.

3.1.12 In relation specifically to Chairs of Audit Committees, the CIPFA guidance states that one characteristic of a good Audit Committee is, "a *strong, independently minded chair – displaying a depth of knowledge, skills and interest*".

3.1.13 The CIPFA guidance also makes it clear that a key feature of a successful committee will be a strong chair displaying a depth of skills and interest. They suggest that the specific characteristics required of an effective audit committee chair will include:-

- ability to plan the work of the committee over the year and beyond
- skills of managing meetings
- ability to bring an objective, apolitical attitude
- core knowledge and skills required of audit committee members
- a clear focus on the role of the committee and an ambition to lead the committee in line with good governance principles
- a focus on improvement and securing agreement on actions.

3.1.14 It should be noted that there is no statutory requirement or recommendation within the CIPFA Guidance that Chairs of Audit Committees should be independent co-optees.

CIPFA Self-assessment of Good Practice questionnaire for Audit Committees

3.1.15 The CIPFA Guidance also includes a suggested self-assessment questionnaire which sets out CIPFA's key principles of recommended practice. Authorities are encouraged to use the checklist as a starting point and as an indicator of whether they are meeting recommended practice and also of the Committee's effectiveness. Following use of the questionnaire, any changes or improvements that may be needed can identified within the overall objective of enhancing the Committee's performance.

3.1.16 The CIPFA Guidance explains that when an audit committee has a high degree of performance against the good practice principles, it is an indicator that the Committee is soundly based with a knowledgeable membership.

3.1.17 Completion of the self-assessment can also offer a number of other benefits. It can for example be used to support the planning of the Committee's annual work programme and to identify any training needs of Members and develop related training plans to meet these needs.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The report does not have any policy implications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There will be some costs incurred in recruiting an independent Chair with suitable skills and expertise (if changes to the Constitution are agreed by Full Council).

4.2.2 The Chair of Audit Committee receives a Special Responsibility Allowance pursuant to the current Scheme for Members' Allowances. The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel have been asked to consider the payment and amount of an allowance for a co-opted Chair of Audit Committee, and make recommendations, which will be considered by full Council at its meeting on 18 September 2017.

4.2.3 As indicated above a potential risk could be an over-reliance on an independent members by other committee members which could lead to a lack of engagement across the full Committee. Another potential risk is a lack of organisation knowledge or 'context' on the part of an independent member when considering risk registers or audit reports. However with the provision of relevant and targeted induction and training, these risks can be reduced and mitigated.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The Audit Committee is an ordinary committee of the Council. As such, the requirement in section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to maintain political balance on the Committee applies. This requirement would still apply if the Chair of the Committee was a co-opted, non-voting independent member. If the number of elected members on the Committee remains the same as it currently is, political balance will not be affected by the addition of an independent Chair.

4.3.2 Section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that subject to a number of exceptions, (which do not apply in the circumstances), a co-opted member of a Committee shall for all purposes be treated as a non-voting member of that Committee. Therefore, if full Council agreed to a requirement for Audit Committee to have a co-opted independent Chair, that Chair would not be able to vote.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no equality and health implications arising directly from this report. Any future process to recruit an independent Chair for Audit Committee would need to have due regard to equality considerations.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 The Audit Committee was consulted at its meeting on 3 July 2017 regarding its recommendation in relation to an Independent Chair of the Audit Committee.

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 None specifically.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Report and minutes of the Audit Committee of 3 July 2017 (agenda item 6)

5.2. *Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2013 Edition, CIPFA, Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy.*

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer