

## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 26 February 2018 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

**COUNCILLORS:** Malpas, Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Larratt, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Smith, Stone and Walker

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Ashraf, Kilbride, M Markham and Patel declared personal non-pecuniary interests as board members of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).

### 2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

### 3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Cali, Caswell, Davenport, Duffy, Hill, Kilby-Shaw, Lane and B Markham.

### 4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that Mayorfest had been a success with over 500 tickets sold and over £2,500 raised for Alfie Bear's Journey, and that a quiz night held at The Lab had raised over £300 for the charity.

The Mayor reported that he and the Mayoress had visited New York and Northampton Massachusetts, with dignitaries on both sides keen on forging closer links. An LGBTQ event had been organised for 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018 to coincide with the American town's own LGBTQ event.

The Mayor advised that the raising of the Commonwealth flag would take place on 12<sup>th</sup> March and asked Members to attend. He further advised that nominations for Heart of the Community were open.

The Mayor explained that due to Northamptonshire County Council being unable to set a precept in time for Northampton Borough Council to finalise their Council Tax report, the item could not be agreed and would be adjourned until 5<sup>th</sup> March.

The Mayor proposed a suspension of standing orders under Rule 25 to enable the movers and seconders the opportunity to speak for a maximum of 10 minutes and that no other speech exceeded 5 minutes (with the exception of the Leaders of the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups on item 8) in relation to budget items 8 and 9.

It was also noted that in accordance with the requirements of the 2014 regulations, recorded votes would be held on all matters relating to the budget items 7, 8 and 9 of the agenda.

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

Brian Hoare addressed the Council and stated that parishes were being treated unfairly as special expenses had increased by 48% over the last 2 years, in contrast with non-parished areas whose special expenses had been increased by less than 10%, and called for them to be scrapped. Mr Hoare stated that whilst the Council had acted lawfully, he did not believe that it had acted fairly.

## **6. CORPORATE PLAN - REFRESH**

Councillor Nunn submitted a report that sought approval for the Council's Corporate Plan for 2018 to 2023 and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive any final necessary amendments to finalise the Corporate Plan for publication.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

The Council debated the recommendations and detail in the Corporate Plan.

The recommendations were agreed.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Corporate Plan (2018 to 2023) attached to the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive any final necessary amendments to finalise the Corporate Plan for publication.

## **7. ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES REPORT**

Councillor Eldred submitted a report advising Council on the robustness of the estimates in the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

There voted for the recommendations:

Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Kilbride, King, Larratt, Malpas, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant and Walker.

There voted against the recommendations:

Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Russell, Smith and Stone.

There abstained the Mayor.

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

That careful consideration be given to the content of the report with regards to the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account prior to the approval of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/23, the Revenue Budget for 2018/19, Capital Programme 2018/23 and Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19.

**8. GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2018-19**

Councillor Eldred submitted a report which reported the outcome of the consultation process on the 2018/19 General Fund Revenue and Capital Budget and the Government Funding Settlement for 2018/19 and to agree Cabinet's proposals for recommendation to Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018 for the 2018/19 General Fund budgets and Council Tax level and the indicative levels for 2019/20 to 2022/23. It also outlined the General Fund Capital Programme and Funding proposals for 2018/19 and future years.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

Councillor Stone made a statement commenting on the deliverability and impact of the administration's budget and outlined a "vision of how things could be done differently".

Councillor Beardsworth made a statement and commented on performance management regarding the Environmental Services contract and the lack of funding coming from central Government.

There voted for the recommendations:

Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Kilbride, King, Larratt, Malpas, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant and Walker.

There voted against the recommendations:

Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Russell, Smith and Stone.

There abstained the Mayor.

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council approved:

- a) An average rent decrease of 1% per dwelling, in line with the legislation and the government's national rent policy, to take effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.
  - b) The HRA budget for 2017/18 of £52.7m expenditure including options detailed in Appendix 1.
  - c) The HRA capital programme for 2017/18, including future year commitments, and proposed financing as set out in Appendix 2.
  - d) The proposed service charges listed in Appendix 3.
  - e) The Total Fees proposed for NPH to deliver the services in scope for 2017/18 detailed in Appendix 4.
  - f) That Cabinet be authorised, once the capital programme has been set, to approve new capital schemes and variations to existing schemes during 2017/18, subject to the funding being available and the schemes being in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the Council.
- 2.2 That the Council acknowledges the issues and risks detailed in the Chief Finance Officer's statement on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of the reserves.
- 2.3 That the Council confirms the reserves strategy of protecting balances wherever possible to allow the option of supporting future years' budgets, aiming for a minimum level of unallocated Housing Revenue Account balances of at least £5m for 2017/18, having regard to the outcome of the financial risk assessment.
- 2.4 That Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer to implement any retained HRA budget options and restructures.
- 2.5 That authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, and where appropriate the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder to:
- Transfer monies to/from earmarked reserves should that become necessary during the financial year.
  - Transfer monies to /from HRA working balances between the Council and NPH for cash flow purposes should that become necessary during the financial year.
  - Update prudential indicators in both the Prudential Indicators report and Treasury Strategy report, for Council for any budget changes that impact on these.

## **9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET, RENT SETTING 2018/19 AND BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2019/20 TO 2022/23**

Councillor Eldred submitted a report which sought to approve the HRA 2018/19 budget and the HRA indicative levels for 2019/20 to 2022/23, rent setting, service charges and other charges for 2018/19, including the Total Fee proposed for Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) to deliver the services in scope for 2018/19.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

There voted for the recommendations:

Councillors Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, T Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Larratt, Malpas, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Smith, Stone and Walker.

There abstained the Mayor.

### **RESOLVED:**

2.1 That Council approved:

- a) An average rent decrease of 1% per dwelling, in line with the legislation and the government's national rent policy, to take effect from 2nd April 2018.
- b) The HRA budget for 2018/19 of £52.1m expenditure detailed in Appendix 1.
- c) The HRA capital programme for 2018/19, including future year commitments, and proposed financing as set out in Appendix 2.
- d) The proposed service charges listed in Appendix 3.
- e) That Cabinet be authorised, once the capital programme had been set, to approve new capital schemes and variations to existing schemes during 2018/19, subject to the funding being available and the schemes being in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the Council.
- f) The Total Fees proposed for NPH to deliver the services in scope for 2018/19 detailed in Appendix 4.

2.2 That the Council acknowledged the issues and risks detailed in the Chief Finance Officer's statement on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of the reserves.

2.3 That the Council confirms the reserves strategy of protecting balances wherever possible to allow the option of supporting future years' budgets, aiming for a minimum level of unallocated Housing Revenue Account balances

of at least £5m for 2018/19 having regard to the outcome of the financial risk assessment.

2.4 That Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer to implement any retained HRA budget options and restructures.

2.5 That authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, and where appropriate the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder to:

- Transfer monies to/from earmarked reserves should it become necessary during the financial year.
- Transfer monies to/from HRA working balances between the Council and NPH for cash flow purposes should that become necessary during the financial year/
- Update the budget tables and appendices, prior to Council should any further changes be necessary.
- Update prudential indicators in both the Prudential Indicators report and Treasury Strategy report, for Council for any budget changes that impact on these.

#### **10. COUNCIL TAX 2018/19**

This item was deferred until 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

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

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7:58 pm