

## **MINUTES**

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH  
COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 22 July 2019  
AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Choudary, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Stone and Walker

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

There were none.

### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 June 2019 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

### **3. APOLOGIES.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Caswell, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, Malpas, McCutcheon and Smith.

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

At the Mayor's invitation the Deputy Leader, Councillor Larratt was pleased to announce that East Hunsbury won the best large village category in the Northamptonshire Village Awards. The Judges were impressed with the work conducted in the community. The Mayor said he would send a letter of congratulations to the parish council.

At this point during the meeting a point of order was called citing Articles 2, 3 and 18 of the constitution. This referred to the fact that elections had not been held in accordance with the usual election cycle. It was asked that the Council was dissolved and the meeting be suspended due to being in breach of the constitution.

The Monitoring Officer explained that a parliamentary order had been issued suspending elections until May 2020. The parliamentary order superseded the Council's constitution.

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

Norman Adams addressed the Council saying he felt democracy was being undermined and the Council's time had expired in May 2019. He asked all of the

members to resign and allow the public to vote to elect a new Council.

Ruth Hemmingway addressed the Council explaining she was part of Extinction Rebellion Northampton. She thanked the Council for declaring a zero carbon emergency. She looked forward to seeing all motions of an ecological or climate nature being passed.

Sandy Maitland addressed the Council and indicated she didn't feel listened too last time she addressed Council and she felt the decision had already been made. She felt that the consultation had been designed to reach a specific conclusion and members were now staying in power for longer than they should. The people's vote in May had been removed and the public were left to trust those who remained. She asked that an all-party group was formed that was free from a party whip.

Tony Mallard addressed the Council explaining that Northamptonshire Partnership Homes had made great strides and the new builds were excellent. He accepted the difficulty in finding new areas of land to build on however there was a problem at Eastfield's. He felt there was a lack of forethought with the design being altered from bungalows to flats. The service road would be closed for twelve months. He indicated the site should have been prepared before the work had started.

Dagmar King addressed the Council thanking them for the response to her petition regarding the transient site. She felt that a second night shelter would not help the rough sleepers or those with pets. The town had got used to people sleeping in doorways. She asked if the people camped on Sheep Street could stay there as they had nowhere else to go. She indicated that many needed an account to be set up to help them manage their money to pay bills.

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

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

Questions and answers were given as tabled unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question asked relating to question five, Councillor Hallam indicated he was happy to consider all options for campaigns to address the issue of fly-tipping.

In response to a supplementary question asked relating to question eight, Councillor Hallam indicated the Council would work with groups regarding the clean-up following community events.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

Councillor Nunn submitted his report as Leader of the Council explaining a member briefing session on the unitary status had been held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The Council had been successful in getting through the first round in its bid for the Future High Streets Fund. The first meeting of the cross-party Town Centre Regeneration

Working Group had taken place. Work was ongoing regarding the Greyfriars site. He requested that any motions submitted should include costings going forward.

In response to questions asked Councillor Nunn explained that many motions received could have a positive impact however it was hard to vote for them because they did not include the costings to show viability. The funding available from the Future High Streets Fund would allow the Council to begin key areas of the regeneration which in turn could attract further funding. There were a number of electric car charging points in the borough and all options to increase the number were being considered. The Council would want to ensure the history of County Hall was retained however there was a need to consider if the building could be used in such a way as to generate income. He shared member's frustration that the old bus station in St James remained undeveloped however the owners now had a clear view as to when investment in the site would be undertaken. The Council would monitor this.

Councillor Larratt submitted his report as Deputy Leader of the Council explaining that the Councillor Development Group had met last week and the reporting tool would be updated and upgraded. Training for the Standards Committee would be arranged.

In response to questions asked Councillor Larratt also congratulated Chantelle Cameron on her recent boxing success. He was sure the Mayor would be delighted to write to her and wish her well on her impending title fight. He clarified that the market traders were an essential part of partnership working. He felt that the legal department was doing a fantastic job and had the right capacity. The Council was getting good support from England's Economic Heartland and they were working hard to provide another train route into London.

Councillor King submitted her report as Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety explaining that the Northampton Lottery was being launched on 23 July 2019 and she urged all community groups to attend to become a beneficiary of this lottery. The media launch for the summer events programme was also taking place on 23 July 2019.

In response to questions asked Councillor King explained the Police and Crime Panel considered the draft policing plan due to be released soon. If members had any safeguarding concerns she suggested they be reported to the MASH team. She was happy to meet with members to discuss the funding arrangements for Community Law and the Citizens Advice Bureau. It was planned that the museum would re-open in the spring of 2020.

At this point the Mayor advised Council the time limit of 45 minutes for the item had expired.

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Stone made a statement on 'The Northampton Economy'. She explained that Northampton needed a healthy local economy to thrive. A living wage was required for everyone and the wage gap should be addressed. Staff should be given

the opportunity to train in artificial intelligence. She felt that the retail and tourism sections of the town needed to work together. Opportunities should be available to encourage students to stay in the town after they graduate. It was queried what was being done to encourage people to take on high end apprenticeships. Small and medium enterprises should be supported. The voluntary sector should be included as an equal partner. Meeting the skills gap would assist the Northampton Economy. She felt that outsourcing services was a failed experiment and that funding should be kept local.

In response Councillor Nunn explained there were twenty five enterprise zones in the county and Northampton was fourth in that list. In 2016 Northampton was listed as the best place for start-up businesses outside London. Northampton had more jobs than people available to do them, therefore people travelled into the town to work. A business incentive grant was available and the Vulcan works would create sixty eight new business units in the town.

Councillor Stone believed that the Department for Work and Pensions suggested that finding a job in the area would be challenging. She felt that growth had happened due to cheap unskilled labour that did not bring growth to the economy. There was a need for the Council to generate its own income alongside the grants it received.

## **9. CHANGES TO THE APPOINTMENTS TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Councillor Stone proposed the report which sought to confirm the following appointments to the Planning Committee:

- Councillor Brian Oldham (Chair);
- Councillor Jamie Lane (Deputy Chair);
- Councillors Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Golby, Haque, Kilbride, Kilby-Shaw, B Markham, M Markham, A McCutcheon and Russell.

Councillor Birch seconded the report.

At this point the Mayor called for the report's recommendations to be voted upon. All members voted in favour. The recommendations in the report were agreed.

**RESOLVED: That Council agreed that Councillor Cali was appointed to the Planning Committee to replace Councillor Joyce.**

## **10. CHANGES TO HMO LICENSING FEES**

The Mayor explained that the report had been deferred to September's Full Council meeting to allow further work to be undertaken.

## **11. COUNCIL RESPONSE - MHCLG LETTER**

Councillor Nunn proposed the report which sought approval to the response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) letter to the Council's Chief Executive.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Members discussed the report indicated that agreement was needed given the costs

and risks involved however it was felt that no other options were available. It was felt that democracy was an important part of society however the electorate was becoming more and more disengaged. It was suggested that the proposal should not be approved. It was noted that the letter had been sent to the Chief Executive in May and queried why it was only just being discussed. It was queried what would happen if the proposals were not enacted next year as planned.

In his right to reply, Councillor Larratt explained that the situation was not ideal but unless there was a change in government Northampton had to do the best it could in the time it had left. The powers to be contained in the structural change order were yet to be determined.

At this point the Mayor called for the report's recommendations to be voted upon. 14 members voted against with the remaining members voting in favour.

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the draft response attached at appendix 2 to this report.

## **12. NOTICES OF MOTION**

At this point a point of order was called citing Article 4 indicating there was a need for members to have a clear understanding of the role of motions and it was asked that a meeting be held to discuss this.

i) Councillor Hallam proposed and Councillor Kilby-Shaw seconded the motion:

“This Council recognises that the rapid growth of Hybrid and Electric vehicles.

Council welcomes the recent news that it has been awarded a grant to put 2x new Rapid Charging Points in its Town Centre car parks to add to the network of points we already have in the Borough.

Council also recognizes the contribution of the private sector in ensuring that Northampton already has a substantially larger network of point's available compared to similar towns nearby. Council welcomes the work of companies such as Nationwide in providing an extensive network of points in the town for its employees and welcomes a recent announcement by BP that it intends to deploy publically available charging points at many of its forecourt sites.

Council agrees to work with companies seeking to deploy such technology and to work with Northamptonshire County Council as the Highways Authority to aim to increase the amount of Rapid Charging Points available to the general public in Northampton.”

Members debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

ii) Councillor Hallam asked to withdraw the motion and this was agreed by Councillor Hill the proposed seconder.

Council agreed this proposal.

iii) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Hill seconded the motion:

“At the council meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June there was unanimous cross party support for action to be taken to address the “climate emergency”. Making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030 must be accompanied by conserving and enhancing biodiversity across Northampton and managing its green Infrastructure.

This council adopted a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning document in May 2015 and this will influence new developments but will not affect the general conservation and enhancement of the existing environmental infrastructure that is vital to reducing Northampton’s carbon footprint.

In August 2011 under the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs issued a report entitled: - BIODIVERSITY 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services. The mission for this strategy was to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.

The council requests a report to be presented to the Council meeting in September setting out how this council has responded to the Biodiversity 2020 challenge and highlighting the areas that still need to be addressed that needed to be considered in the preparation of the 2020/21 budget.”

An alteration to the amendment was submitted by Councillor B Markham to amend the final paragraph to read ‘The council requests that, and following on from the cross party meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019, a report be presented to the Council meeting in September setting out how this council has responded to the Biodiversity 2020 challenge and highlighting the areas that still need to be addressed that needed to be considered in the preparation of the 2020/21 budget.

The Mayor asked Council if they accepted the alteration to the motion. Council accepted.

Members debated the altered motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

iv) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded the motion:

“Air Quality Policy 2 of The Northampton Low Emissions Strategy states:  
“We will aim to reduce the vehicle emissions that have a harmful effect on air quality, by increasing the attractiveness of low polluting alternatives to the private car and

encouraging modal shift.”

Air Quality Policy no 6 states:

“We will work with operators and Government to seek the introduction of buses fuelled by alternative fuel sources in Northamptonshire.”

Other Local Authorities with similar policies have imposed target dates to ensure the introduction of alternative fuelled buses in their areas. Northampton does not have such a target and as a result we are getting older more polluting vehicles that other areas have banned.

We therefore call on NBC to work with public transport operators, Northamptonshire County Council and Michael Ellis MP, ( Minister of State, Department of Transport, ) to take urgent action to :-

1: Ban all diesel buses that do not meet EURO 5 Emissions standards or higher, from scheduled bus and coach services, in Northampton by 1st April 2023.

2: To ensure that buses and coaches that do not meet EURO 6 standards are withdrawn from scheduled service routes by 1st April 2025.

3: Produce a public transport plan for the Northampton Travel to Work Area that will enable the councils and successor authorities to secure funding for a Low and Ultra-Low Emissions Public Transport Infrastructures. With the aim of getting rid of diesel powered buses from Northampton and the county by 1st January 2030.”

An alteration to the amendment was submitted by Councillor B Markham to add two additional recommendations numbered 4 to read ‘To campaign to stop cars and buses idling, enforcing this with fixed penalties under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) Regulations 2002’ and numbered 5, to read ‘ To establish car free zones around schools wherever possible.’

The Mayor asked Council if they accepted the alteration to the motion. Council accepted.

Members debated the altered motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

v) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded the motion:

“The council is currently consulting on Part 2 of the Local Plan with the view of submitting the draft for public inspection in 2020.

The draft plan has introduced a more detailed categorisation of open space which differentiates between Parks and Gardens and Amenity Green Space.

Many well-known parks have been categorised as Amenity Green Spaces (AGS)

which is defined as Informal recreation and green spaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work.

The council is concerned that the public would not recognise their local park as complying with this definition and requests that consideration is given to all open spaces, with play equipment supplied and maintained by this council, be classified as Parks and Gardens and not as Amenity Green Spaces.

Members debated the altered motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

vi) Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Roberts seconded the motion:

This Council recognises that poverty, as an issue in the county, has a major impact on the life chances of our citizens. We have 18,000 plus children living in poverty. We are seeing an increasing number of our elderly, vulnerable residents living in poverty. We will therefore, working with partners and services, develop an anti-poverty strategy that will:

- seek to prevent people and families becoming poor;
- support people and families with appropriate measures when they are poor, and;
- support people to maximise their income to get them, and the following generation, out of poverty.

This strategy will be offered to the new Unitary Authority as a working document.”

Anya Willis addressed Council speaking on behalf of Restore Northampton. She indicated that poverty in the town was a very real problem with people using food banks and being employed on zero hours contracts. Families were having to choose between having a roof over their heads, food on the table and getting the essentials for their new baby. The Council needed to recognise the issues in the town and work collaboratively with these third sector agencies.

An alteration to the amendment was submitted by Councillor Birch to replace the last line of the motion with the following ‘We commit to setting up a six member cross party working group by the end of November 2019, to develop a strategy and this will be brought back to full Council.

Members debated the altered motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

### **13. 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 9:30 pm