

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH
COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 18 July 2016
AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: His WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Malpas (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, Eales, Eldred, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kilbride declared a personal, non - pecuniary interest in Motion ii) as a Board Member on Northampton Partnership Homes.

Councillor Oldham declared a personal, non - pecuniary interest in Motion ii) as a Board Member on Northampton Partnership Homes.

Councillor Bottwood declared a personal, non - pecuniary interest in Motion ii) as a Board Member on Northampton Partnership Homes.

Councillor Hadland declared a personal, non - pecuniary interest in Item 7 - as a Trustee of Delapre Abbey Conservation Trust.

2. MINUTES.

With an amendment to the minutes, correcting Motion i) as having being carried the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th June 2016 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors G Eales, Chunga, J Hill, Flavell, Parekh and Choudary.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that a memorial ceremony was held in the Courtyard in memory of Jo Cox MP, who tragically lost her life on the 16th June 2016. I wrote to the Mayor of Kirklees Council who thanked me for the letter sent expressing our deepest sympathy. Members were notified that on the 1st July the Mayor had attended an overnight vigil at Abington Park Museum in remembrance of those who fought in the battle of the Somme

The Mayor announced he had held a charity Curry night on the 3rd July at the Maharaja where a total of £415 for the Mayor's charity was raised. It was explained that the Mayor would soon be on his way to Marberg, as part of the Twinning Trip. This would be Verity's first time on plane with her new doggy passport. Other Verity related news; £300 was raised by staff and officers when he visited the Guildhall with the 'Puppies in training'.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Cross (WASPRA) commented that he was dissatisfied with the upkeep of Kingsthorpe Cemetery specifically with regards to the Litter Bins, the grass cutting and the cuts to services; his solutions were to use small bins that could be emptied more frequently, use bags to collect the cut grass and to extend the Town Boundary so those in Northampton boundary pay their Council Tax to Northampton Borough Council rather than Daventry District Council. He thanked Councillor Aziz for his support and assistance.

Ms Bartlett spoke of instances that had been reported to her via Facebook with regards to the poor service if grass cuttings and stated that many people had complained of disrespectful practices, broken benches, damaged grave stones and flowers and memorials being damaged by the weight of the long grass cuttings and asked that the Council improve its services and make improvements in a decent and respectful manner.

Mr Leach commented that since he last addressed Council he had discovered the number plate of the Mayor's car was more than he had thought and questioned the financial priorities of the Council.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 18 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers given were as tabled (included in an update agenda on the website) unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked, as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor Nunn explained that there were multi-agencies working together to make the Town Centre cleaner, such as the Town Centre Strategic Partnership, including the Police and Town Centre Wardens.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 5, Councillor Hadland explained that the two proposed scheme for the Greyfriars sight had been well researched with regards to the potential impacts on the Town Centre and looked forward to the selection process of the proposal being carried out in September.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor King explained that there may be future commercial ventures which would benefit the local area of the Racecourse and noted that a lot of work had been carried out with residents and a de-brief would be held with the events team to discuss achievements.

In response to a supplementary questions relating to question 9, Councillor Hadland confirmed that there was not further guidance from the Secretary of State but assured Council it was on its way.

In response to a supplementary questions relating to question 10, Councillor Markham reported that the Council received no funding from the European Union and therefore Brexit would not directly impact on the finances of the Council.

In response to a supplementary questions relating to question 11, Councillor Hadland confirmed that there were no cemetery provision through section 106 monies.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Markham, as the Leader of the Council submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She noted that a Service Level Agreements was being developed with organisations that would be funded this year through the Partnership Grant. The Leader noted the commitment of the Administration of rejuvenating the Market Square to encourage and attract people and business into the heart of the Town. It was also reported that the final draft of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was out for consultation and subject to the results of the consultation, it was anticipated that the order would be in place by November 2016.

In response to questions asked, the Leader confirmed that the sustainability of the voluntary sector was being looked into and it was hoped that a 4 year plan could be an avenue to be explored. She further stated that they were working with Market Traders, through the Markets Advisory Group, to explore ways to improve the Market Square. It was confirmed that the benches that had been installed by the fountain in the Market Square had been removed due to issue with anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Nunn submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated further noting the achievements of the Town Centre Strategy Partnership which would focus on developing Town Centre with other stakeholders. He commented that he had recently met with the lead organiser of the Association of Far Cotton Enterprises (AFCE) who sought to bring together the commercial community of Far Cotton. He further noted that the Market Advisory Group had met twice since June 2016 with a lot of marketing and PR work being undertaken to advertise and promote the market.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Nunn commented that Members would be kept up to date with the developments of the AFCE.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that a public information event was due to be help from the 18th to 20th July on the final submission from the developers on the Greyfriars site and encouraged Members to attend the event. He noted that the commercial kitchen at Delapre Abbey was due to open on the 27th October 2016.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland explained that there were no other plans to provide more public toilets as there was one at the Bus Station and that further provisions would have to be made through the commercial sector. On the matter of social housing, he confirmed that some providers struggled to 'pepper pot' the social housing in new developments as the management of properties could be difficult when spread about.

Councillor Eldred, submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that the Councils Draft Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 had been signed off by the Chief Finance Officer and had been published in advance of the 30th June 2016 deadline and had been passed to the external Auditors (KPMG); the draft Accounts would be presented to the Audit Committee in July 2016.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Eldred commented that Brexit was unlikely to have a direct impact on the finances of the Council as they received no funding from the European Union. He noted that there had been an overspend on staff in the Revenue and Benefits department but that it was necessary to ensure that the workload was manageable. He also explained that the provision of £100,000 would help with the costs of the Tree Programme and tree maintenance.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated further by noting that on the 13th July 2016 the Leader had launched 'Together we change lives' – a multi-agency strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton. He noted that the Councillors private sector housing team had established a good practice alliance with the University of Northampton as part of the strategy to improve student housing.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert stated that Housing Associations were contributing to social housing and that efforts were being made to organise more building of homes with Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH). He also confirmed that there was a 'HIMOs hotline' and that Councillors would be emailed information relating to it.

Councillor Bottwood submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon and stated that he was unhappy with the service that had been provided by the contractors with regards to the cemeteries, mentioned by the public speakers. He noted that it was not purely environmental factors, such as the weather, that had impacted on the service but that there had also been some mechanical failures of machines. Responding to another question asked, Councillor Bottwood noted that there was no right to light or TV reception but that it could be a policy that could be adopted and he would explore ways in which this could be done.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Beardsworth made a statement as set out in the agenda. She listed the Manifesto pledges that had been made by the Conservative since 2011 and questioned why the administration had walked away from an agreement with Legal and General which would have massively benefited the Council as part of a Borough wide Planning policy. She also stated that the cost of opening up Abington Street to

traffic at £6 million was a waste of resources and money. Councillor Beardsworth went on to question the decision to close the award winning toilets on Sheep Street which resulted in a shortage of facilities. She also challenged the amount of fly-tipping and rubbish in the area and stated that it was continually getting worse but there was still no 'zero-tolerance' policy in place. She further criticised the Administration's pledge that they would '*listen to disabled people*' but then let them down over reduced funding to Shopmobility. Councillor Beardsworth referred to the football club and commented that there had been criticism of them not being involved in supporting sports clubs during the Liberal Democrat term in Administration and highlighted the financial problems that the Council now faced with regards to the loan to the football club.

Councillor Markham responded by stating that they had stuck to their original pledges and commented that financially, the Conservatives had much better controls over their budgets. She noted some of the achievements of the Administration of the past 5 years including the development of the new Bus Station, developments of Angel Street and Bridge Street. She further commented that almost 2000 jobs had been created in the Enterprise Zone in conjunction with Private Sector Investment in the area.

Councillor Beardsworth noted that when they had first been in Administration, the Council had been put in 'Special Measures' and that they had effectively lifted the Council out of the position. She further noted that they had been responsible for the sale of Cliftonville House and during her term 8 new Council houses had been built at sustainable level 5.

9. APPOINTMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTORS - THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

Councillor Markham proposed a report which sought Councils approval to appoint officers of the Council as Health and Safety Inspectors under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following officer posts of Northampton Borough Council be designated as Inspectors under Section 19 of the 1974 Act on the terms set out in Appendix 1 be designated to:

- *Environmental Health and Licensing Manager*
- *Senior Environmental Health Officer*
- *Health and Safety Officer*
- *Senior Food & Safety Officer*

and to delegate authority to the Director of Customers and Communities to sign the written instruments appointing individual Inspectors.

2. That approval be given as a Council policy, the indemnification by the Council, of Health and Safety Inspectors appointed by the Council under the 1974 Act

in circumstances where an action is brought against an Inspector in respect of an act done in the execution or purported execution of any of the relevant statutory provisions, against the whole or part of any damages and costs or expenses which the Inspector may have been ordered to pay or may have incurred, in cases where the Council is satisfied that the Inspector honestly believed that the act complained of was within his powers and that his duty as an inspector required or entitled him to do it, providing the Inspector was not wilfully acting against instructions.

10.CHANGES TO COMMITTEE PLACES AND CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Patel proposed and Councillor Oldham seconded a report that sought to confirm changes to Committee Places and Consultation Appointments.

RESOLVED:

2.1 That Councillor Ansell replaces Councillor Lynch on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 That Councillor Patel replaces Councillor Lynch on the Audit Committee.

2.3 That Councillor Kilbride replaces Councillor Sargeant on the Community Enabling Fund Advisory (CEFAP) Panel.

11.NOTICES OF MOTION

Anjona Roy addresses Council on Motion i) and commented that she welcomed the motion from Councillor King and stated that it was right and proper for Hate Crime to be stamped out and commented that there had been an increase in reported Hate Crime since Brexit. She went on to suggest that there be a Hate Crime Officer employed by the Council.

i) Councillor King proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded:

“This Council recognises the excellent work that has been undertaken by our forums, inter-faith groups and partner organisations to help promote community cohesion within the Town.

In particular Council recognises the excellent “Stamp Out Hate Crime” campaign previously undertaken by the Youth Forum and pledges to work with these groups to look at future campaigns which help promote community cohesion within the Town.

This Council also notes the Prime Minister’s recent announcement of the work the Government is doing in this area and the extra funding that is being made available.

This Council is committed to helping further this good work to ensure Northampton continues to be a diverse and tolerant town and one in which can be proud to live”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

ii) Councillor Meredith proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded:

“Council recognises its ongoing obligation to the social housing tenants of Northampton, highlighted by Council member’s membership of the board of Northampton Partnership Homes.

Council notes with concern the many recent instances of poor quality repairs and maintenance of the housing stock.

Council resolves to work with Northampton Partnership homes to improve delivery of their contracts, the standard of maintenance work, and the general satisfaction of tenants”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

iii) Councillor Smith to propose and Councillor Davenport to second

“One of the issues for shopping and retail areas in the town is commercial waste. Traders are responsible for taking out contracts with private waste collection services. These great big commercial bins have lids that should be kept locked.

However they are an eyesore and are visible all over the town. The lids are often not locked and bins are often overflowing with rubbish. The bins attract other refuse and so we often see fly-tipping and black sacks around the commercial bins. This in turn attracts vermin, rats, foxes, cockroaches.

This Council believes this cannot go on. This Council therefore agrees to take the following steps:

1. Instruct planning officers not to allow new applications where waste bins cannot be kept off the street.
2. Work with existing traders to ensure their bins are labelled and locked.
3. To survey where the bins are left out on the streets and come up with local solutions agreed with traders to provide bin storage areas”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

Anjona Roy addressed Council on Motion iv) and commented that she was part of an organisation that was addressing hate crimes and urged the Council to work closely

with her and the campaign, called 'More in Common – Hope not Hate'

iv) Councillor Russell proposed and Councillor Haque seconded:

"We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our town. We condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable.

Northampton Borough will work to ensure local bodies and programmes have support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia. We are a town of many of faiths.

We reassure all people living in Northampton that they are valued members of our community and this will long continue."

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

v) Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor Culbard seconded.

"This Council recognises the importance of Trade Unions in this local authority. They have played a crucial role in helping members of our staff.

As a good employer Northampton Borough Council welcomes the role of public sector unions looking after the interests of the staff. It is good for us as a council to have a way of negotiating pay and conditions with the staff. We do this through negotiations with union officers.

It is often through the unions that members of staff let us know if there are issues at work that need to be addressed. It is with this in mind that we would like to go on record as being an employer that encourages staff to join a public sector union.

We believe Trade Unions should play a big role in the Cultural Change programme currently being undertaken".

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

12. 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 9.14pm