

## **MINUTES**

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 19 September 2016 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

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

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

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

### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016 were agreed and signed by the Chair with the following amendment:

That Councillor M Hill was present at the meeting.

### **3. APOLOGIES.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Walker, Chunga, Russell, Golby and Sargeant.

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

The Mayor informed the meeting of the sad news that Hilary Phillips has sadly passed away. She was former Mayoress during Richard Church's his term in office and informed Members that he would write on behalf of the Council with our condolences.

The Mayor welcomed back Cllr Brian Markham who, following the by-election in the Westone Ward.

The Mayor thanked those Councillors and Officers who had participated in the Mayor's Charity Abseil, including Councillors King, Parekh and Shaw and Debbie McColl and Neil Wooding. It was reported that the Mayor's Charity Auction raised over £5000 for Guide Dogs Northampton for naming a puppy, which is to be called Tilly.

Finally, he reminded Members that on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September the Mayor's Charity

Barn Dance would be held and urged people to attend to help raise money for his Charity.

The Mayor called upon the Leader of the Council to make an address.

The Leader of the Council stated that a recently, there had been an incidents regarding a man in severe distress who may, left unattended, have to come harm. She explained that Mr Paul Cullum (Town Centre Operative) had come to the aid of the gentleman and had gone above and beyond the call of duty and presented him with some vouchers as a token of the Council's appreciation.

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

Mr Leach stated that he had submitted a petition to the Council calling for them to sell the Mayor's number plate in order to raise and divert funds to shopmobility to assist less able-bodied people using and accessing the Town Centre.

Ms Bradshaw reported that she was speaking on behalf of the residents of the Bouverie Estate and that having submitted a petition to the Council in January 2016; the Borough Council had failed to respond to the needs of residents and had not given proper consideration to the residents' concerns that were in favour of Permit Parking and requested that meeting be had with officers and residents to address their concerns.

Mr Clarke stated that not only was he opposed to the proposed Waste to Energy Plant being built in St James, but anywhere in Northampton. He asked that Members give proper consideration to motion iii) and asked the proposer of the motion to not move it so that a meaningful debate could be had, without potentially jeopardising the process under the Constitutional 6 month rule.

Mr Bosworth (Communication Workers Union, South Midlands Postal Branch) presented Council with a petition opposing the Gasification Plant in St James and asked that residents' concerns were given proper consideration. He congratulated the work and action undertaken by the local Community Groups against the proposal.

Mr Adams commented that he would like to see Motion iii) withdrawn as it was in his opinion completely nonsensical. He stated further that residents did not want to see a Gasification Plant in the Borough and asked that the Council listen to the voices of the residents.

Ms Scott reported that she was extremely concerned and alarmed by the plight of the people of Syria, who spoke of the tragic situations that some people were living in day-to-day and submitted a petition carried out by Northampton Twin Sancturay group and urged the Members to support motion iv).

Mr Newbury spoke about the work that had recently been completed with a number of multi faith agencies within Northampton and commented on the positive impact of cross faith working. He asked that if the Council witness such groups working closely

together and free of charge, that they should get more involved and offer some assistance and thanked the clearing work that had already been done by 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 were given 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 asked to question 1, Councillor Bottwood explained that whilst weed-spraying was carried out by the contractors, some of the weeds were on the Highways and thus not a responsibility of the Council.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 2, Councillor Bottwood reported that the changes to roadside collection of recyclables, referred to in the question had no financial costs to the Council.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 3, Councillor Hibbert explained that there had been some reforms to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and that it allowed the Council to have more autonomy and actively manager their housing stock.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 5, Councillor Hadland explained that the views and opinions of residents would be given consideration.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 8, Councillor Bottwood explained that should the problem of Commercial Waste become a major problem in the Town, alternative means of collection would be looked into.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 10, Councillor Eldred explained that the savings of bringing back some of the resources from LGGS would be in the region of 410% and noted that over £1 million had been saved from the contract with LGSS.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 11, Councillor Bottwood explained that there were plenty of places for people to dispose of cigarette butts and that people needed to take responsibility to properly dispose of all litter and commented that they were currently working with specific shops to encourage them to install ashtrays.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 12, Councillor Bottwood explained that National Guidance had changed and that separate dog waste bins were not a necessity and that there was an added cost to the use of these and therefore there was a move away from installing any new ones.

In response to a supplementary question asked to question 18, Councillor Markham gave her assurance that she would communicate fully with residents about the recent concerns over the health impact of the proposed gasification plant and reported that she too would expect all residents to get involved in any consultation process.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

The Leader of the Council submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She commented that having met with PwC to review the internal audit draft report she had welcomed numerous recommendations that had been made which were being put into place. She further elaborated on the Borough Council's Business Incentive Scheme, which the Council had committed £50,000 for improvements to be done with landlords contributing more than £300,000 towards the enhancement of their buildings, improving the overall appearance of the Town Centre.

In response to questions asked, the Leader explained that the Administration had instigated a Police Investigation into the loan of money to Northampton Town Football Club as well as conducting an internal and external audit investigation into the matter and assured Members that once the work had been undertaken and completed it would be shared with members of the public.

The Deputy Leader of the Council submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. He reported that there had been numerous events held on the Market Square over the summer months that had been very successful, including 'The Beach' and a number of other events of entertainment which had increased the vibrancy of the Town Centre. He further noted that they had been extremely proud of the achievements of the Northamptonshire County Cricket Club and subsequent open top bus and civic reception that had been held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

In response to questions asked, the Deputy Leader stated that he was not aware of an increase in the number of 'Chuggers' in the Town centre but would gladly meet with any Councillor who wished to raise concerns.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. He reported that the 7C Edgar Mobbs Way planning applications had been approved following finalisation of S106 agreements to secure highways improvement works. It was also noted that a planning application for the change of use of the former British Rail Social Club to a night shelter had been received and would be considered at the next Planning Committee meeting to be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland explained that the disposal of 14 Fish Street had been a sound decision and that consideration was also given as an alternative to disposal of Council owned buildings and land. He also explained that a full and exhaustive consultation had been undertaken on Greyfriars for 2 very detailed proposals which were going to be progressed. He further explained that an independent survey had been commissioned which concluded that there was the

market for another cinema in the Town Centre. He confirmed he supported the new strategy for parking standards.

The Cabinet Member for Environment submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. He reported that Northampton had received the Silver Guild Award as part of the East Midlands in Bloom competition and was also awarded for '*Bringing Town into Bloom*' category.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Bottwood explained that he was working very hard with Enterprise to eradicate problem areas where Fly-tipping and rubbish dumping was prolific but called on fellow Councillors to help by using the phone app to alert officers so that it could be dealt with swiftly and explained that as the Town Centre itself was becoming less of a hot-spot for fly-tipping, so the wardens would fan out to other areas of the Borough. He further reported that he was unsure of the number of unpaid fixed penalty notices but assured Members that agents would ensure that those who had not paid would be pursued.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Well-being submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. He commented that the submission of the planning application for the former British Rail Social Club to a night shelter was a big step in the right direction and stated that if the application be approved by the Planning Committee it was expected that the shelter would be up and running by mid November 2016. He further reported that he had been involved in working collaboratively with the hospital to assess the needs of discharged patients in order to assist in facilitating the safe discharge of patients.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert explained that there was a very pressing need to get a firm grip on the problems faced by bed blocking and the discharge of patients and stated his commitment to working with multi-agency groups to assist in tackling the problem.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She explained that since the beginning of April 2016, 122 projects had been supported through the Councillor Community Fund. She further noted that there were 3 new Partnerships within the One-Stop-Shop; health Watch, Voluntary Impact and First for Wellbeing.

In response to questions asked, Councillor King explained that neither the shop, nor the bus stop in Thorpелands was under the control of the Council. She further reported that she would explore specific health facilities with the Youth Forum to consider the use and health implications of 'vaping' on young people.

At this juncture of the meeting, the Mayor explained that time restraints had drawn Cabinet Member reports to a close.

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Council was notified at this point, that there was not to be any Opposition Group Business.

## **9. COMMITTEE PROPORTIONALITY**

Councillor Patel proposed and Councillor Oldham seconded a report that sought Council's approval of the number of and group proportionality of seats on each Committee.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the number of Committee places on Planning be increased by one, from 12 to 13
2. That the overall number of allocated Committee places be increased from 69 to 70 and that the Borough Secretary be authorised to amend the Constitution to reflect the changes.
3. That the representation of the political groups be as set out in the report

## **10. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

Councillor Patel proposed and Councillor Oldham seconded a report that sought the confirmation of Council to the appointment to Committees following the by-elections on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the appointments to Committee set out in the report be confirmed following changes to the proportionality of Committees.

## **11. DELEGATION OF PLANNING DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF PINEHAM BUSINESS PARK**

Councillor Hadland proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded a report that sought approval to the delegation of the Council's decision making authority as local planning authority to South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) to enable SNC to determine an anticipated cross-boundary Section 73 planning application to vary planning conditions in respect of outline planning permission S/2015/1798/EIA and anticipated subsequent reserved matters application for Plot 2A of the development at Pineham Business Park.

### **RESOLVED:**

That Council delegate its decision making authority as local planning authority to SNC in respect of:

- (i) the determination of an anticipated cross boundary planning application pursuant to Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of outline planning permission S/2015/1798/EIA and
- (ii) the approval of subsequent reserved matters for Plot 2A of the development at Pineham Business Park.

## **12. NOTICES OF MOTION**

The Mayor reported that Motion i) had been withdrawn.

Mr Adams explained that he considered the motion to insinuate that tenants are to blame for the poor upkeep of some properties and noted that some tenants were already paying a service charge as part of their tenancy agreement to have their litter picking done and therefore should not be expected to pay twice.

ii) Councillor Davenport proposed and Councillor Haque seconded:

“This Council recognises the importance of a tidy neighbourhood. Excessive untidiness over a period of time in a neighbourhood reduces pride in the area and ultimately attracts litter and rubbish.

This Council believes that tenancy agreements should ultimately be enforced to ensure gardens and landscaping is kept tidy and free of rubbish. This helps to increase pride in the neighbourhood.

Where people are unable to maintain their gardens (such as the very elderly and the disabled) they need to be given the appropriate support.”

Councillor Hibbert proposed and Councillor M Markham seconded an amendment:

Amended motion to read:

“This Council recognises the importance of a tidy neighbourhood. Excessive untidiness over a period of time in a neighbourhood reduces pride in the area and ultimately attracts litter and rubbish.

This Council believes that tenants are responsible for keeping the gardens and landscaping tidy and free of rubbish. However, if issues are reported or raised during walkabouts, they will be forwarded and actioned.

This Council will continue to challenge residents under the tenancy agreement as problems arise.”

Council debated the amendment.

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

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Mr Clarke addressed Motion iii) and stated that only recently had Cabinet withdrawn a report with proposed developers of the Waste to Energy Plant due to a lack of consultation and that since then, there had been no further consultation or communication with residents by the developers. He further reported that a Waste to Energy Plant was not a recyclable option and it would still add to the carbon footprint. He urged the Council to reconsider the motion and requested that it be withdrawn as to debate it would disallow any further motion to be put forward for debate for another 6 months in accordance with the Constitution.

Mr Croucher stated that he was very much against the motion and stated that there needed to be more communication with residents who potentially could be affected by the proposal. He reported that it had become clear that Northamptonshire County Council were not against a Waste to Energy Plant and said that many people had written and protested in opposition to the proposal. He thanked Councillor G Eales and the Leader of the Council for having met with residents to discuss concerns and thanked them both for their pragmatic approach.

Mr M Sawyer explained that having referred to the original Cabinet report that had been withdrawn and explained that there had been a failure to address air quality issues and the impact of these on Northampton should an incinerator be allowed. He explained that the potential toxic emissions released by a gasification plant were known carcinogens' and highlighted the recent air quality sensor undertaken that had shown Northampton as the worst in the UK and that a gasification plant would further exacerbate the poor air quality.

Mr Badhree spoke as a resident of St James and stated that the current air quality was chronically bad in the Town and that 300-400 deaths a year in Northampton could be attributed to pollution and poor air quality and commented that Councillors had a duty of care for its residents and therefore should oppose the motion.

Mr Adams congratulated the action groups for their recent participation in opposing the Waste to Energy plant and thanked the Councillors who had spoken against it. He questioned the consequences if something were to go wrong at the plant and the potential danger to residents.

Mr Calder questioned why some of the Labour Group were not engaging with residents and suggested that the motion looked like a disguised support for the Waste to Energy Plant. He stated that whilst researching the topic, he could not find one example of a similar proposal working and stated that he supported the views of the residents unless someone was able to present him with evidence and proof to the contrary.

Councillor Ashraf indicated that she wanted to withdraw the motion.

Council debated the consent to withdraw.



Council agreed to withdraw Motion iii)

Ms Nina Kerrou addressed motion iv) and stated that she had volunteered to work alongside refugees and stated her appreciation of donations received from the people of Northampton and stated that many of the recent news images had awoken the conscience of people and asked that members support the Motion.

Mr J Alwahabi reported that the increased number of asylum seekers and refugees seeking safety was increasing due to conflict and conditions primarily in countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Syria and Afghanistan and spoke of the plight of unaccompanied child refugees and urged Members to vote in favour of the motion which would show that Northampton welcomed the vulnerable children and help them to feel safe and secure.

Mr Isherwood spoke against the motion and stated that those coming in were economic migrants and not refugees. He commented that the Government had said they would offer rent for those housing refugees, but questioned what pressures would be put on other local amenities such as local hospitals and schools.

iv) Councillor Stone to propose and Councillor M Markham to second:

“This Council has a great sympathy for the plight of refugees and notes the concerns of many local residents who may wish us to be a town that welcomes Syrian refugees fleeing civil war, extremism and brutality. Northampton could be a place of sanctuary. Whilst we have many local organisations willing to offer assistance, NCC and NBC cannot provide all the support services needed to accommodate refugees in Northampton.

This Council also recognises that there are genuine concerns from local residents over housing and school places. These need to be acknowledged and addressed, for example, we are in the process of setting up a facility for homeless people and are tackling pressures on housing.

This Council will work with Northamptonshire County Council and other local organisations and review our capacity to deliver on a regular basis. In the meantime other areas within Northamptonshire will continue to provide places while they are able to accommodate the specific needs”.

Council debated the 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.**

The Mayor confirmed that a matter of urgency had arisen that needed to be considered and noted that the motion had been circulated.

Councillor M Marham proposed and Councillor King seconded:

“This Council proudly recognises the outstanding achievement of Ellie Robinson, who blew away her competitors in the 50metres butterfly at the Paralympics in Rio, setting a new record and claiming the gold medal for Team GB.

This Council is honoured to be able to congratulate Ellie for her victory. At a very young age of 15, she is a true inspiration not only to young people in Northampton, but across the country. We can without a doubt say that our town is full of pride and we all look forward to welcoming Ellie Robinson home when she returns from Rio”.

Members debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

The meeting concluded at 9.27pm