

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 30 January 2017 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, Caswell, Chunga, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, M Hill, Kilbride, King, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Cali, Choudary and Flavell and Lane.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Councillor Eldred submitted a report that sought Council's approval of the proposed amendment to the Local Tax reduction scheme from a 29% reduction in support in 2016/17 to a 35% reduction in 2017/18. He clarified that pensioners and war widows would be exempt from the reduction.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Stone questioned why the administration was asking the poorest residents to pay and noted that 67 other local authorities had found ways of protecting their poorest, questioning why Northampton Borough Council had not done the same. She noted that work incentives had weakened and that for many residents, work did not pay. She stated that there was a real possibility of more residents falling into arrears if this proposal was to be agreed.

Councillor Birch noted that there were other reforms that would be affecting the most vulnerable, including cuts to PIP, Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. She stated that most of the residents claiming CTRS were on a reduced benefit to begin with and that this would only lead to more debt for people who were already struggling.

Councillor Beardsworth noted that residents would be hit with an increase in rates from both the Borough and County Councils. She stated that there were other ways to increase revenue that did not hit the most vulnerable, noting that many residents already have to choose between heating and eating and that figures showed 1 in 4

children living in poverty. She commented that local income tax would be a fairer means of revenue.

Councillor Ashraf echoed the concerns raised by other Councillors, stating that many of her constituents were only just managing and that they were already feeling the burden of austerity on their shoulders. She suggested that the administration take more time to come up with a different, fairer means of generating revenue.

Councillor Davenport expressed concerns about the reduced benefit cap, stating that this, along with the reduction in CTRS, would undoubtedly lead to more homelessness. She stated that the situation needed to be looked at holistically.

Councillor Haque echoed sentiments expressed by previous Councillors, noting that many residents in his ward were classed as vulnerable and already struggling.

Members debated the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council endorse the recommendation contained in the Cabinet Report attached no later than the 31st January 2017.

4. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017 -2018

Councillor Eldred submitted a report that sought the approval of the tax base for 2017/18.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Stone expressed her support, but went on to note that it was regrettable that Council Tax had been frozen for 6 years, rather than increasing it in line with inflation. The poorest, she stated, would once again be receiving the hit.

Councillor Beardsworth stated that an increase was necessary to pay for frontline services but noted her disdain for the 6 year Council Tax freeze.

Members debated the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the tax base for 2017/18 at 65,709.29 Band D equivalent properties and associated parish tax bases within this report.

	2016/17	2017/18	Change
Billing	2,626.96	2,678.57	51.61
Collingtree	513.97	513.75	-0.22
Duston	5,447.94	5,471.83	23.89
Great Houghton	287.50	288.21	0.71
Hardingstone	782.38	795.44	13.06
Upton	2,617.14	2,993.14	376.00

Wootton, Wootton Fields & Simpson Manor	2,927.45	2,940.72	13.27
East Hunsbury	3,412.11	3,408.98	-3.13
West Hunsbury	1,624.70	1,645.76	21.06
Hunsbury Meadow	505.36	501.41	-3.95
Northampton (Unparished)	43,612.52	44,471.48	858.96
Total tax base	64,357.94	65,709.29	1,351.35

The meeting concluded at 7:24pm.