

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 13 March 2017 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Choudary, Chunga, Culbard, Duffy, G Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, M Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mary Markham, Chunga, Bottwood, Kilbride and Ashraf declared personal non-pecuniary interests in item 13ii) as board members of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).

Councillor Flavell declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in item 13iii) by virtue of being a trustee at Northampton Leathercraft Museum.

Councillor Hadland declared a personal non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of Delapre Abbey.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February were agreed and signed by the Mayor, save for the following addition to item 8.

Councillor Beardsworth addressed the Council and made a statement on the General Fund and Budget 2017/18.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Aziz, Terrie Eales, Davenport and Marriott.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that Item 9 on the agenda had been withdrawn and would be coming back to Council in three months.

On Tuesday 7th March the Tibetan Flag raising at the Guildhall took place and was well attended.

On Friday 10th March the Mayor attended the Royal Navy Inspection evening and announced the future Mayor's Cadet who will take post in May.

On 16th March the Mayor was to attend the High Sheriff Lecture at Delapre Abbey.

The Mayor commented that there were still some tickets available for the charity dinners at the Saffron and Indian meal. To purchase tickets Councillors needed to speak to the Mayor's assistant

The Mayor confirmed that he had agreed to the holding of an extraordinary meeting of the Council on 3rd April on the Growing Together Neighbourhood Plan, this needed to be adopted before 21st April and there was no Council meeting scheduled before this date.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Dagmar King submitted a petition to the Council addressing concerns around inadequate facilities at Victoria Street coach station. She commented that the one toilet was regularly out of order and it was unacceptable for passengers to have to wait to use the coaches on board toilet facilities. Furthermore there were not enough benches for people to sit while waiting to depart and a sign indicating the location of nearby amenities would be useful.. It was considered that these improvements would deter rough sleepers. Mrs King asked officers to listen to residents and for councillors to support her petition.

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 updated agenda on the website) unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 1, Councillor Eldred stated that consultation on a bus station at Greyfriars had already been discussed and put forward.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor Hallam confirmed that work had now started on overgrown trees and shrubs in the town and would ensure that Councillors were kept up to date on progress in their wards.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor Hadland stated that there were two overflow car parks for the station, which were both underutilised. Officers were in the process of preparing a business case to be presented to Cabinet.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 4, Councillor Hadland commented that WNDC had been consulted on the possibility of provided a taxi shelter, however Northampton Borough Council were not the planning authority for the station, instead this was the responsibility of the rail company.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 6, Councillor Hibbert informed Council that he had been in regular contact with the volunteers working for the shelter.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 7, Councillor confirmed that he would provide a written answer as to how the apprentices at the Council were trained.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor King commented that the Chief Executive's boards discuss the allocation of money and she would endeavour to get the exact figures in a written response.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 9, Councillor King stated that community wardens had been out to assess the situations across communities.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 11, Councillor Nunn confirmed that he would provide a written answer on the breakdown of hours worked by the Council's apprentices.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn, the Leader of the Council, submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He noted progress made on Delapré Abbey, including a stakeholder event that attracted media attention. He also noted that the Council continued to tackle town centre traffic and that he had recently attended a Tourism Partners Briefing, with the view that tourism would become an important aspect of the town's economy. The Leader, along with the Cabinet Member for Environment, had been engaging with Amey to ensure that the Environmental Services contract continued to run smoothly until its end. Also, for the peace of mind of residents, a grass cutting schedule was being sought and would be made public in due course. The Leader commented that good progress had been made with the Governance Action Plan and that regular reports were being brought to the Audit Committee, further noting that an independent person was to be sought for Chair of Audit.

In response to questions asked, the Leader stated that higher emissions were a sign of increased traffic and whilst this was unfortunate, it did mean that more customers were coming to spend money in the town centre. He did agree that there was a need for the roads to be able to cope with heavy traffic in the case of an accident or road closure. The Leader stated that weeding around the town would likely take place at the same time as grass cutting.

Councillor Larratt, the Deputy Leader, submitted a report and elaborated thereon. It was noted that following storm Doris, several lights had to be removed from South Bridge, a locally listed structure and that NCC/Balfour Beatty were not looking at repairing, or even continuing to operate them, so the matter of retention and ongoing operation would be brought to the meeting on March 7th. It was further noted that the new lights around All Saints Church and Fish Street were temporary and that the permanent fixtures would be in place in due course. The Deputy Leader also stated

that there would be a Scrutiny training event on the 4th April and that all councillors were invited to attend.

In response to questions asked, members heard that Market traders had previously discussed its location; they were happy with where it was but the layout warranted looking at further and officers were working on plans. It was stated that the Licensing Department had been asked to monitor the Auctioneers pub and that market traders did have the option to formally request a review of the pub's licence. The Deputy Leader also informed members that while South Bridge was the responsibility of NCC/Balfour Beatty, the Council were looking at refurbishing it. He also stated that while he had received none so far, he welcomed invitations from any and all sports clubs regarding the Thorplands development. He noted that regarding councillor training, although attendance had been varied, the sessions had been mostly positive and that councillors were welcome to see the analysis of feedback given. Regarding the Cultural Strategy, the Deputy Leader stated that an initial discussion with officers had taken place but this was at a very early stage.

Councillor Hadland, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He stated that footfall in the town centre for the period April 2016 to January 2017 was up 1.5% compared to the same period for 2015/2016.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland stated that there had been a sharp increase in the number of visitors to the town making use of the two hour free parking and in most cases people stayed for a third hour. Members were informed that the planning page on the council's website had been down for too long, however he was assured that this would be back up and running by the end of March.

Councillor King, the Cabinet member for Community Engagement and Safety, submitted a report and elaborated thereon. It was noted that 48 applications had been received for the Partnership Grant Application process and that a panel would be meeting in due course to consider these. Councillor King commented on the success of International Women's day and congratulated Pat Haslem for winning the 5th annual Inspirational Woman Award. She noted that recent events had gone well and they would all be planned for the coming year. It was also noted that Bands in the Park would be starting in April, as well as a new campaign starting on Saturday 18th March, helping to keep people safe while on nights out. This campaign had received support from the Police & Crime Commissioner.

In response to questions asked, Councillor King informed members that applications received always outweighed the money available but that Community Engagement were always working to find more funds. She also noted that when volunteer work took place in a councillor's ward, that councillor should be made aware and she would make sure this was the case going forward. Councillor King also noted that Belweather Homes had not formally bid for funding from the Councillor Community Fund for new play equipment at Falklands, but she would be happy to meet with them to look at the possibility of alternative funding.

Councillor Hallam, the Cabinet Member for Environment, submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He stated that following storm Doris, Amey had been extremely responsive regarding fallen trees and offered his thanks. He also stated that work

was ongoing to procure an enforcement service to tackle environmental crime and that an Environmental Provider would be appointed in due course.

In response to questions asked, members heard that there was no public involvement with regard to Environmental Services and Overview and Scrutiny because it was a working group made of members, not a panel open to the public. Councillor Hallam stated that he was happy for Overview and Scrutiny to carry on how they saw fit. He further stated that a 10 year contract was being looked at because that was the average length of time the waste collection vehicles lasted before needing to be replaced. He also commented that the Air Quality Scrutiny Panel would come back to councillors with recommendations in due course.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Council on Business Rate Revaluations. She commented that the business rates were a huge concern for a number of small independent traders within Northampton. With the rise in business rates many small businesses were now exploring running their business online, this would in turn create a number of empty shops in Northampton town centre. With spending tighter than in previous years it was clear that small businesses were struggling in the current economic climate. She urged the administration to write to the two local MP's and encourage them to bear in mind small shops in the town centre.

Councillor Eldred in response commented that out of 832 small businesses in the town 611 would pay nothing in business rates due to their rental valuation falling below £12,000 per annum. Of the 211 that were to be affected there was no further help available to 103 of them. The remaining would be able to claim transitional relief and the Council would do all they could to assist.

In reply Councillor Beardsworth stated that the Government were hurting small businesses and a discretionary relief would only prolong the inevitable. In addition she did not want to see any more empty shops in the town.

9. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

10. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017-18

Councillor Nunn submitted a report, required by the Localism Act 2011 that requires every local authority to annually publish a Pay Policy Statement.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2017/18 attached to the report at appendix 1.

11. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2017-18

Councillor Patel submitted a report that sought Councils approval of the meeting cycle for 2017/18.

Councillor Oldham seconded the report.

RERSOLVED:

That the meeting cycle for 2017/18 attached at appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

12. CHANGES TO APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Patel proposed a change to appointments to outside bodies, that being Councillor Russell replace Councillor Chunga on the Northampton Partnership Homes Board.

Councillor Oldham seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Russell replaced Councillor Chunga on the Northampton Partnership Homes Board be approved.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Meredith seconded.

“The public continue to express concern about the facilities provided for travellers using the Victoria Street Coach Terminus.

Council is concerned that the administration's plans for coach facilities linked to the proposed Greyfriars's Development will fail to provide the, user friendly and convenient, modern facilities coach travellers arriving in town expect and deserve.

We call on the Council to carry out consultation with coach users, operators and the general public to ensure that coach facilities on offer in Northampton in the future are a credit to the town rather than an indictment of this council”.

Councillor Hadland proposed and Councillor Larratt seconded an amendment.

Amended motion read:

“The public continue to express concern about the facilities provided for travellers using the Victoria Street Coach Terminus.

This Council notes that the developer of the Greyfriars site has been fully informed about the need to provide a user friendly, convenient, modern coach facility and the Council will seek the provision of nothing less than what Northampton expects and deserves.

The Council will carry out consultation with coach users and operators, taxi providers and the general public to ensure that coach facilities on offer in Northampton in the future are a credit to our town”.

Council debated the amendment.

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

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

ii) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded.

“Councillors from all parties have spoken recently about the crisis in social housing and there is a belief that we need to start building council houses again.

With this in mind, we ask the Administration to explain why the proposal from Northampton Partnership Homes to build upwards of 1, 000 council houses over the next 10 years , which they have had since September 2016 , has yet to be evaluated”.

Councillor Hibbert proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded an amendment.

Amended motion read:

“Councillors from all parties have spoken recently about the crisis in social housing and there is a belief that we need to start building council houses again.

With this in mind, a New Housing Board, which involves officers of both Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), is working on a number of projects and programmes to help increase the amount of new affordable housing within Northampton.

NPH has progressed the regeneration of Little Cross Street with 34 units under construction. An application has also been submitted to build 45 flats for older people at Lakeview House. In the last two years the Council has acquired 15 buy-backs and spot purchases and the Council is acquiring a further 6 properties on the same basis as part of a development by a social housing provider.

Since 2011, the Administration has seen over 900 affordable homes completed. While some of the planned developments have had to be temporarily put on hold, the Council continues to work with DCLG on the possible use of Local Growth Fund borrowing to deliver further development of new homes over an extended period.

This Council, therefore, recognises and understands the need for housing on Northampton and affirms its commitment to build more council houses”.

Council debated the amendment.

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

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

iii) Councillor Flavell proposed and Councillor Larratt seconded.

“This Council is extremely proud of the National Leather Collection (NLC) based in Northampton - the heart of the UK’s leather and footwear industry, and congratulates the NLC Trust on establishing their new home in The Grosvenor Centre. The Collection’s history, education and heritage is of a tremendous importance to our town, and we very much look forward to it becoming accessible to the public.

This motion confirms this Council’s continued support for the NLC Trust in their work. Northampton Borough Council and Councillors will continue to work collaboratively with the Trust to ensure its ongoing short and long term success in town”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iv) Councillor Nunn proposed and Councillor Larratt seconded.

“This Council notes that South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) has completed Part 2A Issues and Options stages of its Local Plan, and is now preparing the Draft Plan for consultation.

To address the 5 year housing land supply shortfall in the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA), SNC has resolved to allocate a reserve development site in its Local Plan Part 2. Two sites have been submitted to SNC’s Local Plan Call for Sites at the Issues and Options stages. The two sites are:

- East Wootton – About 1,200 houses
- Land at South East Northampton – About 1,000 houses

This Council strongly objects to any further development to the South and South East of Northampton due to the impact it will have on local services, the lack of road infrastructure improvements and the impact on the A45 and local road network without adequate mitigation.

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits were approved as a Special Protection Area (SPA) in April 2011, due to the range of habitat and the varied topography of the lagoons providing valuable resting and feeding conditions for major concentrations of wintering water birds, especially ducks and waders. The area was also designated a Ramsar site, as it regularly supports 20,000 or more water birds and regularly supports 1% of the bird individuals of Mute Swan and Gadwall. Some species also spend time feeding and roosting on surrounding agricultural land outside the SPA.

Therefore, this Council also expresses concerns regarding the two sites being put forward for development as they have been identified as optimal and sub-optimal sites for Golden Plover and / or Lapwing activity.

This motion calls for SNC to take fully into account the views of Natural England – a statutory committee – and other relevant wildlife organisations, in developing and preparing its Local Plan, especially with regard to sites in the NRDA”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

v) Councillor Haque proposed and Councillor Birch seconded.

“This Council notes there is a growing recognition of the detrimental impact of air pollution on human health.

This Council believes it must be proactive in reducing air pollution where it is practical to do so.

In order to educate young people in our town this Council asks Cabinet to purchase air quality testing kits for each secondary school within the Borough.

This can help children understand the level of air pollution in their area and will provide useful data for the Borough Council to take action”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

vi) Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Ashraf seconded.

“This Council recognises the benefits of having a “Young Mayor” and of having a youth representative to the UK Youth Parliament.

The benefits of a Young Mayor.

- Power and influence
- Getting youth voices heard
- Understanding and development
- New skills

We will work with the youth forum to develop this role.

The benefits of having a UK Youth Parliament representative

The UK Youth parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their

elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning.

The UK Youth Parliament, has chosen 'votes for 16 and 17 year olds in all public elections and referenda' as its national campaign for 2017. A 'curriculum for life; was also chosen as the UK Youth Parliament's priority campaign for England for a second time.

In January a total of 276 Members of Youth Parliament aged 11-18 took part in the debates, the subjects for which were voted for by 978,216 young people across the UK.

This Council recognizes it will be a benefit to have Northampton represented in the Youth Parliament".

Councillor King proposed and Councillor Golby seconded an amendment.

Amended motion read:

"The Northampton Borough Council (NBC) recognises the great importance of involving young people in current affairs in our town. We, therefore, have a very active and involved youth forum in Northampton and have been working with them on a large number of issues.

Members supported Happy Day at the racecourse, gathering feedback specifically around mental health and well-being, which has been identified by the forum as a key priority for young people. They also provided support to the Guildhall with the Heritage Tours at capacity of 120 people, the opening event of the Hate Crime Week with more than 60 people attending and the Holocaust Memorial Event. The forum has been working on several ongoing projects, including the Oral history project encouraging the crucial intergenerational integration and Hate Crime work.

Furthermore, the youth forum are holding international youth day on the 12th August and cake and debate for UK Parliament Week on 17th November.

The NBC, therefore, believes that having a youth mayor would undermine the youth forum chair's position.

The Council, however, also recognises the calls for electing a youth representative to the UK Youth Parliament.

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In January a total of 276 Members of Youth Parliament aged 11-18 took part in the

debates, the subjects for which were voted for by 978,216 young people across the UK.

This Council confirms that it will work further with Northamptonshire County Council, who previously held the UK Youth Parliament seat, to explore the option of having Northampton represented in the Youth Parliament again”.

Council debated the amendment.

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

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

14. 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 Time Not Specified