

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 10 July 2017 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

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

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th June 2017 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Malpas, M Hill, Parekh, Chunga, Russell, Cali and McCutcheon.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor thanked the members of the Council who had attended the ceremony at All Saints Church on the 9th July 2017 and noted that £421 had been raised for the Mayors Charity. The Mayor announced that Armed Forces Day had been successful and noted that on the 1st July 2017 he had attended the Northampton festival. The Mayor commented that calendar invites would be sent to all members to notify them of future mayoral engagements that they may wish to attend including the Alfie Bears Picnic, Caribbean themed Gala Dinner and Blue-light boxing match.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Scott Maloney (MND Association Northamptonshire) addressed Council and commented that over 40 other Councils had adopted the MNF charter and spoke of the suffering of those people who were directly and indirectly by the illness. He stated that there was no cure for Motor Neuron Disease or prevention but by adopting the charter, the Council would show support for those suffering and respect for people suffering from MND and their carers.

Mr Patrick Cross (Chair of WASPRA) commented that he was pleased to see the Council supporting the Orbital Road and reported that the County Council Cabinet report would need to have a business case prepared which would justify the project.

He stated that there was a need for the proposed orbital road to be fit for purpose and recommended that an Overview and Scrutiny Panel be established to examine the proposal.

Ms Dagma King commented that she was currently very disappointed with the benches around the bus station and stated that she had recently been in contact with Blackpool Council who had installed benches that were not wide enough for people to sleep on and commented further that the lack of toilet facilities was also an ongoing issue and asked that a response to her ongoing queries be completed within 14 days.

Mr Brian Hoare commented that the Emission Report from the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel was not fit for purpose and failed to address the objectives that they had set themselves. He commented that the Council were sending out mixed messages; opening up Abington Street to traffic at a cost of £6 million and then stating that shoppers should leave their cars at home. He questioned why the Council had ceased recording air quality at the bus station in 2016.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 7 questions had been received from Councillor 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 Council's website) unless were stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below:

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 5, Councillor Nunn commented that road safety was a responsibility of the County Council.

Referring to question 7, Councillor Stone explained that she had called-in the Delapre Cabinet decision as Leader of the Labour Group and that the administration had a history of making poor decisions and that she wanted to ensure due diligence to ensure prevent further reputational damage to the Council.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn, as Leader of the Council, submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that he had attended a meeting of the Borough and Districts Councils involved in the unitary proposal and reported that a future briefing event would be held for all NBC Councillors once a fuller analysis and financial implications had been fully examined.

In response to questions asked, the Leader commented that the new Government may not have the same appetite for Unitary Councils but that it would still remain high on the administrations agenda. He explained that the Council did have a number of low emission strategies and noted that he recognised the importance of clean air and a reduction in pollution.

Councillor Larratt, as the Deputy Leader, submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that a Cabinet response to the Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Emission Strategy (Action Plan) would be presented to the Cabinet meeting in September 2017.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Larratt confirmed that he would examine the potential to extend training on FGM to officers, having noted the success of the training sessions for Councillors. In reference to the Market Traders, it was explained that it had been agreed that a steering group be established in order to consult with traders and shop owners and that traders would be consulted on changes relating to the configuration of the market square. Referring to street lights, Councillor Larratt commented that there was a need to identify the streets lights owned by the Borough Council in order to ensure that they were properly maintained and faulty ones reported. He further commented that he would look at making the BBC programme 'Three Girls' available for Councillors to watch and noted that it was essential that Child Exploitation be prevented at all costs.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Members report and responded to the public speaker who had raised concerns about the provision of benches, that there had been 2 extra seats in had been instated at the bus station in March 2017. With regard to erecting seating in the shelters, it was noted that the matter had been looked into but explained that further seating would restrict wheelchairs users and buggies and therefore the seating was erected between two of the shelters.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland confirmed that consultation on the erection of further statues had not been undertaken as the decision to commission the five statues had been taken under his delegated authority as the relevant Cabinet Member. He commented that some of the costs of the statue had been received from the Town Centre Improvement Budget.

In response to a further question asked, Councillor Hadland commented that ward Councillors were consulted on planning applications in their ward and that all planning applications were subject to the council policies and protocols. He noted that there was ongoing dialogue with Churches shoes on the development of the old bus depot and reported that the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) had advised that there was no need for any further transit sites for gypsies and travellers.

Councillor Eldred submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there had been an overall underspend on just over £1 million which would be put back into reserves. In relation to Revenues and Benefits, Councillor Eldred explained that the service was continuing to review impacts of the 2017/118 CTRS scheme to ensure that there was a balance between recovery and support.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Eldred commented that even though all local authorities would have to bring forward their future statement of accounts, there was currently no intention to expand the service area. He also commented that the Council were looking at various ways to secure funding and investments.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and commented that there would be a ghost tour in the Town Centre and noted the success of the Music

Festival, which was held on the 18th June 2017. She further confirmed that she would share information that had been gathered from the youth forum on their attitudes and behaviours towards gambling.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that there were two parks in Northampton that were to be re-awarded the Green Flag status and thanked the gardeners for their continued hard work in helping to achieve green flag status.

At this juncture of the meeting, the Mayor informed Council that the allocated time had been met and no further Cabinet member reports would be heard.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Ashraf stated that Northampton, as a Town, was growing rapidly and noted that there were currently 4,000 families on the housing waiting list. She reported that since 2012, 5,000 council homes had been sold and commented that housing people in bed and breakfasts was not acceptable or suitable in the current age. She voiced her concerns that the Council may be inadequately prepared in the wake of the Grenfell incident and questioned the safety of residents. She further reported that she was pleased with the response of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) and the Fire Service and stated the need for collaborative working.

Councillor Hibbert, as the relevant Cabinet Member stated that he did not disagree that there should be more and better housing but argued that there was a limited amount; more houses were being built including Lakeview and Dallington Grange. He also noted that NPH intended to build 100 new homes a year and clarified that the number of people on the housing waiting list was 3,500 and noted that it was better for people to be temporarily housed in Bed and Breakfasts than it was to be homeless and on the streets.

In response, Councillor Ashraf stated that there was a need for better homes that were cheap to run and that were sustainable and an investment in the future.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, submitted a report which required Council to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report 2016/ 17. He thanked the Scrutiny Officer and the various Panel Members for their work.

Councillor Walker seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2016/17 be noted.

10. CHANGES TO CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Larratt submitted a report which sought Council's agreement to a change in the appointment to Consultation Appointments.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sargeant replace Councillor Malpas on Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel (CEFAP)

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Mayor advised that an altered motion, combining motion i) and vi) had been accepted as an alteration and had been circulated to Members. Council agreed to accept the alteration. The Council agreed with the consent of the original seconder, Councillor Beardsworth, that the seconder would be Councillor Hibbert.

i) Councillor Meredith proposed and Councillor Hibbert seconded:

This council makes the following commitment to all tenants living in Council buildings To feel safe in their homes and have the right fire protections as provided by the Fire Service.

In light of recent events, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) have already instructed the installation of sprinklers in their only high-rise Council building, St Katherine's Court.

The Council will continue a review of the other 10 buildings in conjunction with the Fire Service and any further Government guidance.

To ensure those in private buildings are also suitably protected, this Council resolves to undertake an urgent review of the planning policy with regard to residential developments and provisions for sprinkler systems in all new residential buildings of 5 storeys or above. The Council will also review the possible need for two separate stair cases to exit tower blocks. NPH to be asked to provide tenants of tower blocks fire safety training"

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

The Mayor noted that within accordance to Part 4 (4.2) of the Constitution, motion ii) had been withdrawn.

iii) Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Duffy seconded:

"This Council notes there is a growing and serious problem with social overcrowding in council houses.

This Council believes that the national statutory overcrowding regulations are insufficient. Children in particular are affected as there is a lack of space to study, store their clothes and toys, play with siblings, and invite friends over.

This Council will therefore determine a local standard to include the right to a minimum floor space, storage for clothes and personal effects.

We further ask the Cabinet to investigate ways to help families living in socially overcrowded conditions to move on to appropriate accommodation as their family needs develop.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Choudary, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, T Eales, Gowen, Haque, B Markham, Marriot, Meredith, Smith and Stone

There voted against the motion: Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Bottwood, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, Kilby-Shaw, King, Lane, Larratt, M Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Sargeant and Walker.

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

iv) Councillor King proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded:

“There are 5,000 people at any one time in the UK with Motor Neurone Disease (MND), it can affect any adult of any age and nearly 2,200 people die from this rare but fatal neurological disease each year.

MND describes a group of diseases that affect the nerves (motor neurones) in the brain and spinal cord that tell your muscles what to do. With MND, messages from these nerves gradually stop reaching the muscles, leading them to weaken, stiffen and waste.

Motor Neurone Disease is a devastating condition. Progress has been made through research but much more needs to be done.

This motion, therefore, calls for this Council to adopt the MND Charter and thereby support achieving quality of life, dignity and respect for people with MND and their carers.

The Charter:

- 1) People with MND have the right to an early diagnosis and information.
- 2) People with MND have the right to access quality care and treatments.
- 3) People with MND have the right to be treated as individuals and with dignity and respect.
- 4) People with MND have the right to maximise their quality of life.
- 5) Carers of people with MND have the right to be valued, respected, listened to and well supported.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

v) Councillor Larratt proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded:

“This Council welcomes the development of plans for the Northern Orbital Road around Northampton, from the A43 at Moulton to the A4500 near Harpole. We also welcome the consultation on the emerging plans.

This Council confirms its support for the provision of this road for many reasons, not least to alleviate traffic congestion in the Kingsthorpe area, and wishes to see its construction as soon as possible.

To provide the road at the earliest opportunity, while recognising that its provision is dependent on developer contributions, this Council requires that all further development sites, not currently included within the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, but attributed to the growth of Northampton, are concentrated in the vicinity of the proposed road so that they can contribute to the delivery of this much needed infrastructure and secure its early delivery”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

The Mayor noted that motion vi) would not be moved and as agreed earlier in motion iv) would therefore be treated as a withdrawn motion.

12. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

There were no matters of urgency.

The meeting concluded at 9.03pm