

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 6 November 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, Cali, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Flavell, Golby, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Malpas, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hallam declared a personal non pecuniary interest in Motion iv) as his brother-in-law is an employee of Oxford City Council.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 18th September 2017 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Eldred, Hadland, Chunga, Caswell and Choudary.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that since the last meeting there had been two former Councillors who had passed away and gave condolences on behalf of Council to the families of Trini Crake and Mary Dyer-Atkinson

The Mayor welcomed the newly elected Councillors, Councillor Graystone and Joyce.

The Mayor announced that he had attended numerous events of late which included: MK Dons vs Northampton Town Football Club. He had also welcomed Keith Holland Delamere to the parlour who had been the chair of a local residents association for over 20 years. The Mayor noted that he had participated in a number of Macmillan coffee mornings. He further reported that he and the Mayoress had attended a gala dinner for his chosen charity where almost £7000 had been raised for Alfie Bears Journey. The Mayor thanked the work of Michael Ellis MP for his work in helping award a resident, George Derven, the Legion d'Honneur by the French government for their heroics in the D-Day landings

The Mayor commented that the Mayor's Mash had been launched at Phipps Brewery

and thanked the pubs that had purchased the beer and urged members to support him. He further reported that the authority had signed the 'Dying to work charter' which would be beneficial to those who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness by offering them some protection

The Mayor reminded Councillors of the weekend engagements and urged them to attend and show support for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Pete Cartwright addressed the Council and stated that he considered some of the market traders were being treated unfairly by the Council as he believed there to be various charges for different traders. He stated that the presentation and environment of the Market Square was substandard which gave visitors and users of the market a poor impression of the town. He further commented that there was a need for the Council to step up and take responsibility for the upkeep of the market and urged them to stop unfair charges.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 14 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public and that the answers that 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 where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below;

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor Hallam commented outsourcing of Environmental Services was considered the preferred option and this had been robustly appraised cross party.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor Nunn commented that the revenue that was collected from car parks was reinvested in to the upkeep and maintenance of the Borough car parks.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 13, Councillor Nunn commented that it would be impractical to use Albion House for temporary accommodation as there would be substantial conversion costs.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 14, Councillor Hibbert commented that the 100 new homes had yet to be approved by the Planning Committee and noted that there was no specific date as to when this would be started.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

The Leader, submitted his report and elaborated thereon and noted that included in his report was an update on the governance procedures and commented that there was emphasis on ensuring that his was engrained on the Council. He noted that the new Interim Chief Executive had a background in Monitoring and Governance and

would be undertaking a review of this. With regards to the History and Heritage projects he recognised the need for progress and promotion of the historical assets of Northampton. He noted that there had recently been a number of issues with illegal traveller encampments and noted that there had been ongoing work undertaken by the Council and the Police to address the issue.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Nunn explained that the Council was well prepared, with regards to infrastructure, for the relocation of the University of Northampton. He commented that there was a necessity for some Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs) to accommodate some of the student community and reported that there was a need to ensure that the Town remained attractive and prepared for students. Responding to further questions, Councillor Nunn explained that there was a delay to the building of the 100 new homes due partly to the Police's opinion that there should not be all grouped in one specific area and that there were ongoing sensitive discussions with them and the developer to address concerns. He stated that under the current administration, there had been 97 homes either built or refurbished. In response to a further question, he confirmed that in relation to Unitary status, he had been in discussion with the Leaders, local MP's and Chief Executives of District and Borough Councils and urged members to attend the workshops especially during the time of the financial issues that were faced by the County.

Councillor Larratt submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there had been excellent training sessions for Councillors held including ones on Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy. He mentioned that there were further ones organised on Universal Credit and also debt management.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Larratt explained that training would be made available for Councillors on enforcement issues once the Environmental Services contract was in place. He further commented that a representative of the Council would be appointed to the East West Rail Consortium which would promote the needs of Northampton with regards to the impact and investment of the new Rail links.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and noted the work of the Forums and commented on the success of the Diwale Lights and parade held on the 14th October 2017 which had been attended by over 14,000 visitors. She referred to the success of the Council's Firework display held on the 4th November 2017 which had also been extremely well attended.

In response to questions asked, Councillor King confirmed that she was aware of the problems with regards to motorbikes being used irresponsibly in the Eastern District and noted that she had been working with the Police who were examining different sections of enforcement to tackle the problem and hoped to discuss the issue with the Police Crime Commissioner. Responding to further questions, Councillor King commented that the Museums project board minutes had not been requested from any Councillors and she would check as to whether they were private before sending them to Councillors on request. She stated that delays with the museum were due to the need to check that the project was being carried out to a good standard and noted that the work was expected to be completed by Autumn 2018, with money already provided for the project in the budget. Councillor King explained that there was a

need to check whether the business case was commercially sensitive and noted that any moves to transfer it to a trust would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She further commented that there had been a decrease in reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate crimes.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that recently 20 homeless women had been helped to get into either supported housing or temporary accommodation. He noted that a rough sleepers count was soon to be undertaken and that arrangements were being put in place to provide homeless people with emergency shelter when the temperatures is forecast to fall below freezing for at least 3 consecutive nights.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert reported that there were currently 500 HIMO's in Council stock. He explained that there were very few older people on the housing register waiting for homes; he further noted that attempts were made to house couples together who presented themselves as homeless but explained that it was not always a feasible option.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hallam explained that the tree programme would be implemented by the end of the financial year and explained that they were investing £500,000 over 5 years to look at tree issues that were facing residents. Responding to further questions he reported that the Air Quality Management areas were published on the Council's website and commented that the final Environmental Services Contract would be awarded in January 2018.

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

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Haque stated that there was a need for the administration to work with market traders as they had been left feeling let down and excluded from changes that were being proposed. He explained that Northampton market had been in existence since 1235 and was an integral part of the Town's history and heritage. He commented that he recognised that the shopping habits of consumers had changed but noted that there were other instances of places where markets were trading well. Councillor Haque further reported that he was pleased with some of the improved features to the market area such as the fountain and noted that free parking had also helped although he questioned the price hike after the 2 hour free parking had expired. He commented that the Market Advisory Group (MAG) had worked hard but that many of the improvements they had requested, such as enhancing the gateway had not been done had disappointed the traders; the proposed new layout of the market square and the reduction of aisles had almost raised concerns from stall holders and questioned the plausibility of a reduce rent for regular traders.

Councillor Larratt, in response, questioned the attendance record of Councillor Haque at the MAG meetings during his time as an appointee to the Group. He noted that there had been changes to peoples shopping habits and a number of changes to global manufacturing had impacted on market traders. He stated that all market

traders had been given ample opportunity to participate in the consultation process and not one had done so.

Councillor Haque urged the administration to work with the market traders and not against them. He placed emphasis on the need for collaborative working to ensure that the Council and the traders could move forwards.

9. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EAST WEST RAIL CONSORTIUM

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought Council's agreement to appoint a representative to the East West rail Consortium.

Councillor Patel seconded the report:

RESOLVED:

That the Borough of Northampton be appointed to the East West Rail Consortium and that Council appoint Councillor Larratt to the Consortium.

10. CHANGES TO APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Patel proposed a report which sought Council's confirmation for the changes to the appointment to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Oldham seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Joyce be appointed to the overview and Scrutiny Committee
And that Councillor Graystone be appointed to the Licensing Committee to replace Councillor Parekh

11. CHANGES TO NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES (NPH)

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought Council's agreement for a Councillor to be removed as the Council nominated Director of Northampton Partnership Home Ltd.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Stone voiced some concerns about the reduction in numbers and questioned whether the Board members would be given allowances for their attendance and asked that the report be deferred.

Councillor M Markham explained that as a Board Member of Northampton Partnership Homes it had been made clear to them members that the reduction in number was done on a proportional basis and that opposition group members had been present when this had been discussed.

Council discussed the openness of the NPH Board and it was noted that it was a Board that had been set up by the Council and questioned the need to know how and what was being discussed.

Councillor Nunn commented that progress had been made with NPH and stated that the Board, and the Members appointed, were a credit to the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Russell be removed as the Council-nominated Director of Northampton Partnership Homes Ltd.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor B Markham seconded:

“Council Notes:

1. Each year more than 300 homes for rent are lost in Northampton because of the Right to Buy.
2. In the 4 year period 2013 to 2017 over 50,000 homes were bought in England under Right to Buy.
3. That Northampton has a very high need for affordable housing, and in order to assist in meeting this Northampton Borough Council and Northampton Partnership Homes have developed plans to build more than 1,000 new homes for rent. The loss of affordable homes through the Right to Buy will undermine *this investment to increase affordable stock*.
4. Council notes that in Wales, the Housing (Wales) Measure 2011 allows for councils to request the power from the Welsh Government to suspend the Right to Buy for a 5 year period.

Council requests that the Chief Executive write to The Minister of State for Housing and Planning and our local Members of Parliament , seeking their support, for councils in England to be granted the same powers as our Welsh counterparts, and to report back to a future meeting of the council on progress”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

ii) Councillor Meredith proposed and Councillor Beardsworth seconded:

“Council notes that Northampton Borough Council operates local pay bargaining arrangements for employees on NBC Local terms and conditions.

Council further notes that the public sector pay cap is being applied to thousands of

public sector staff members who live in Northampton

Council believes that the continuation of the public sector pay cap is having a detrimental effect on levels of recruitment and retention across the public sector and is also having an impact on the living standards of thousands of local residents.

Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to request that the cap is removed to allow for meaningful pay negotiations and for the implementation of the recommendations of Pay Review Bodies and to request that any recommended pay increases are fully funded via central government financial settlement.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon the requisition of a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councilors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, T Eales, Haque, Joyce, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Russell, Smith and Stone

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

There abstained the Mayor.

The motion was lost.

iii) Councillor Duffy accepted an altered motion and Councillor Culbard seconded:

“This Council notes that Fixed Odd Betting Terminals (FOBT) are sometimes referred to the “crack cocaine of gambling”.

This Council further notes that due to a relaxation in gambling regulations introduced by the Labour Government in 1999, FOBT gamblers are currently able to bet up to £100 per go on the machines, allowing players to make substantial losses very quickly. People can place £100 every 20 seconds on FOBTs.

Council welcomes the outcome of the current Government’s consultation on stake reduction and that it will be taking action to reduce maximum stakes on FOBT to between £50 and £2.

This Council, therefore, asks the Chief Executive to write to our local MPs urging them to persuade the Government to reduce the stakes on FOBT to the lower end of the proposed spectrum, preferably £2.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iv) Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Davenport seconded:

“This Council notes that at the last meeting a motion was passed calling for a review

of our HMO policies.

This Council asks the review to look at Oxford City Council as a case study and the benefits of adopting their approach. In Oxford the whole of the local authority area is covered by an Article 4 directive and any proposal to create a new HMO, including the change of use of any dwelling to an HMO, will only be permitted where the proportion of properties within 100 metres of street length either side of the property does not exceed 20%.

This Council looks forward to the review being completed in the near future.”
Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

v) Councillor King proposed and Councillor Hill seconded:

“This Council believes that hate crimes have no place in our country, whether based on race, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability.
This Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. All Members of this Council are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society.

This Council will work to ensure that local bodies, organisations, and programmes have the support they need to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia and will reassure all people living in this Borough that they are valued members of our community.

This Council welcomes and acknowledges the UK Government’s announcement of December 11th 2016 that it will sign up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) guidelines on antisemitism.

This Council hereby resolves to:

- a) Adopt the definition of antisemitism as set out by the IHRA, and request that the Chief Executive ensure all relevant NBC codes of conduct are consistent with this;
- b) Work together as an entity to combat this pernicious form of racism.”

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.

None

The meeting concluded at 9.24pm