

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 17 June 2019 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: THE DEPUTY MAYOR Councillor Sargeant (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Chunga, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Larratt, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Patel, Russell, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Council meeting held on 3 June 2019 were agreed and signed by the Deputy Mayor with the inclusion of Councillor John Caswell in the list of attendees.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Mayor of Northampton and Councillors Beardsworth, Caswell, Davenport, Duffy, Lane, Malpas and B Markham.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor had no announcements to make.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Dagmar King addressed the Council presenting a petition and explaining that it had been signed by over 1,100 local residents asking the Council to address the issue of homelessness which manifests itself with a proliferation of tents in and around the town centre.

Everyone wanted to see people located in suitable accommodation however for the homeless this was a long journey. The first need was for them to feel safe and have access to basic facilities. However the homeless were creating their own solutions and homeless women had additional needs.

The petition was seeking the creation of a transit facility that would be the first step to providing people with dignity, safety, and sanitary provisions without impacting on the town centre.

She thanked Churches, other local businesses and the Northampton Chronicle and Echo for their support.

Mr Martin Sawyer addressed the Council saying that action was needed to address the climate emergency. He queried how much recycling went into landfill and how much recycling was transferred out of Northampton.

The impacts on air quality had not been answered, highlighting that the parks and open spaces needed to be protected to create a zero carbon Northampton. He requested that a biodiversity action plan be created. The costs of not acting on this now were nothing if action was taken too late.

Ms Antonella Mercuri addressed the Council speaking of the impact of Barry Howard Homes. She believed that Barry Howard Homes had been trespassing on a site and had started bulldozing without permission. They had fenced off the perimeter, claiming land that they didn't own and blocked a right of way.

She believed that Barry Howard Homes had been digging up the right of way and had installed a three hundred and sixty degree CCTV camera to monitor their equipment. The CCTV camera was mounted at a height of four to five metres meaning that residents back gardens could be viewed along with having the potential to see into people's bedrooms.

She explained that Barry Howard Homes didn't respond when contacted and she queried when the Council would have a positive impact regarding the development.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Deputy Mayor advised that five 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 unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked as detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question asked relating to question one, Councillor Hallam explained the data for June 2019 was different to the data for June 2018. The data was different due to the weather conditions.

In response to a supplementary question asked relating to question four, Councillor Hallam explained the number of hybrid vehicles was growing. The response provided had not included the number of slow charging points, for example Moulton Park Industrial Estate had eight vehicle charging points. This was compared to Kettering which only had one rapid charging point and Wellingborough which only had two rapid charging points. He clarified that Northampton had more combined charging points in total than the rest of the county.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn submitted his report as Leader of the Council indicating that a briefing for Members on Local Government Reform would be held on 20 June 2019.

In response to questions asked Councillor Nunn indicated consideration would be given as to what could be done regarding the clash of events on 20 June 2019. The

Government and Commissioner had indicated there was a good evidence base to create a Children's Trust and he agreed that the best solution should be considered. The Children's Trust needed to be locally engaged to ensure the best outcomes and he would do his best to influence this. He clarified that all the district and borough councils had oversight on all service transformation during the move to unitary authorities.

Councillor Larratt submitted his report as Deputy Leader of the Council and in response explained that the Far Cotton Residents Association in conjunction with others has put in the request for a Community/Parish Council for Far Cotton.

Councillor Hill submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Planning and in response explained that the Planning department did not have resource issues.

Councillor Hadland submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and urged everyone to respond to the Town Centre master plans consultation before it closed on 30 June 2019. Work on the repairs to the Queen Eleanor Cross had been progressing well and it was hoped to be completed by the autumn.

In response Councillor Hadland explained that if the repairs to the Queen Eleanor Cross were not completed before the winter he had received advice that it would be detrimental to cover it during that time.

Councillor Hallam submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Environment explaining that 1500 notices had been issued by the neighbourhood wardens in the last year. The wardens had done a great job.

In response Councillor Hallam explained that as part of the legal process around fly tipping warning notices had to be issued before fines. The trial to replace recycling boxes in Far Cotton with single use recycling sacks would continue with further investigation being conducted in the disposal of the waste before the scheme was rolled out to other locations.

He would resend the email detailing options for toilet facilities at allotments to all members. The public had made it clear that they did not want encampments on parks and where bollards had been installed it enabled the police to act quickly when there was evidence of clear destruction.

He felt the teams were doing well to keep up with the grass maintenance given the current weather climates. It was a four week schedule which he would share with members.

He clarified that there were two electric vehicle charging points close to St James Retail Park. He understood the number of fly-tipping instances were dropping but accepted this was dependent upon the location. It was a challenge to manage particularly when there was a change of people living in houses of multiple occupation. Evidence was gathered and people were prosecuted where possible.

Councillor Hibbert provided an update as Cabinet Member for Housing and provided information on the Call Care survey. The survey had indicated that out of 80,000 calls received 98% had been answered within 60 seconds.

Councillor King submitted her report as Cabinet Member for Community, Engagement and Safety and gave her thanks to the Community Safety team. She explained the forums were still going strong. She thanked Councillor Smith for her support with the PRIDE event. 600 year 6 students had attended community safety events.

In response Councillor King said she had been assured that the insurance costs had been covered by the Council for the Terry Wire Memorial Run. A mixture of events had been held however all forum and community days were managed by the Council.

Councillor Eldred submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Finance and explained that the final year end budget position was an overspend of £0.732m. He welcomed the hard work done to reduce that amount and explained the overspend would be covered by reserves.

In response to a question Councillor Eldred clarified that the income targets for the Guildhall were included in the budget report previously submitted to Cabinet and Council.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Roberts made a statement on 'Planning for the people'. She noted that the parking issues were resolved now that the University had moved to the town centre. Residents seemed pleased with the results. She queried if the consultation and planning process was appropriate. She asked if a long term feasibility study had been carried out given that the university was located close to a residential development. The Council's Local Plan Part 2 was out for consultation and queried if the planning process was biased in the favour of the developer. The Council could not enforce and breaches and the impact on the community must be what tipped the scales. More homes were needed, more affordable housing however there were still risks that meant the affordability criteria was more relaxed. Wildlife sites must be protected. Sustainable travel needs to be considered. There was a need to plan for the right buildings in the right places for the people.

In response Councillor Hill agreed that planning should be for the people. He felt the University moving to the town centre was the right decision. Regarding consultation the Council had a statutory duty and he believed it did try to go above and beyond that duty to reach more groups. Regarding affordable housing the Council had to push to ensure that 35% was delivered.

Councillor Roberts felt there needed to be an improvement in the responses when responding to planning applications. There was a need to ensure that Section 106 funding went back to the communities it was meant for so the local community was supported. There was a need to ensure that the town planning was done right to assist the elderly. The Council should plan right to build and deliver the right society.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

- I. There was no proposer for this motion.
- II. There was no proposer for this motion.
- III. Councillor G Eales proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

“Council welcomes the formation of a Town Centre Masterplan. A bid for funding from the governments Future High Streets Fund can only be a positive thing for Northampton, especially if we are successful. However, it must be noted that until it no longer exists for is replaced, Northampton Borough Council, is the current authority with responsibility for the Town Centre and regeneration. Yet this fundamental role is being circumvented during the Town Centre Masterplan process. The formation of ‘Northampton Forward’ has been undertaken without a mandate from Full Council or indeed the cabinet. This entity is answerable to no-one – as such there is a democratic deficit and no accountability. The board of ‘Northampton Forward’ is scheduled to be the sole decision maker on any final bid that goes forward and the body that considers any public feedback.

There is of course a role for stakeholders and partners, but it is imperative that Northampton Borough Council and elected members play a role in what should be a positive process, as is our elected responsibilities. The Town Centre Masterplan and the grouping that drives it must operate with openness and not on a basis of cronyism. This town has suffered enough of that. To ensure the best outcomes, the following is agree:

- Full Council shall nominate Councillors from each political grouping to sit on the Northampton Forward board. The numbers should be: Conservative 3, Labour 2 and Lib Dem 1. These Councillors should play active roles as board members in considering the feedback from the public and shaping any final plan that is submitted for consideration, working in parity with the rest of the board. The nominees from each political group should be established within 48 hours after this meeting and provided to the Chief Executive, who can then advise Northampton Forward.
- Full Council should formally vote on any final Town Centre plans that are to be part of any bid. This plan can be pre-agreed by the Northampton Forward board ‘in principle’ and then brought to Full Council for rubber-stamping.

With cross party involvement on this issue and on the Northampton Forward board, it will ensure ‘buy in’ from all political groups and everyone positively focused on the best outcome for the town, whilst still respecting the role and democracy of Northampton Borough Council.”

Members debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was lost.

IV. Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Russell seconded:

Mr David Ward of Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire addressed Council indicating that 147 organisations had provided support over the last few months. Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire worked to provide car schemes to take people to appointments and the 'Happy Home' scheme which helped to reduce isolation. They were invested in helping community organisations. He tried to bring additional funding into the county. He asked how the voluntary sector could engage with Councillors. He vocal and passionate about the community sector and promoted organisations engaging in a positive way. He asked that Council helped to share the same vision and provide continuity for people whilst the government reform changes were being undertaken.

"This Council recognises the contribution made to the town by the voluntary sector. They will bring local intelligence, energy, commitment and resources to our localities.

We therefore agree:

- To include the voluntary sector in our forward plans;
- To ensure robust partnerships are in place as we go into the new Unitary Authority;
- To work with Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire to provide the Northampton voluntary sector with sound funding and business advice; and
- To work with VIN and CVS to develop back room services for the voluntary sector."

Members debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

V. There was no proposer for this motion.

10. 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 8:10 pm