

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 22 May 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Nunn (Chair); Councillor Larratt (Deputy Chair); Councillors Eldred, Hadland, J Hill, Hibbert and King

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hallam.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2019 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE IF NECESSARY

There were no items to be considered in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 8: Delegation of Enforcement Powers - Councillor Hibbert declared an interest as Deputy Chair of the Countywide Traveller Unit (CTU). Councillor Larratt declared an interest as a Member of the CTU Board.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

7. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no items to be considered in private, so the public and press were not excluded from any part of the meeting.

8. DELEGATION OF ENFORCEMENT POWERS

Councillor King as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report seeking an arrangement with Northamptonshire County Council to deal with unauthorised traveller encampments in relation to land within Northampton Borough Council's area. This was an urgent issue, because the correct powers were not currently in place.

Councillor Birch stated that she supported the recommendation, although a more permanent solution was needed. Were the Council considering a temporary site with water and toilet facilities? Councillor Nunn suggested that a ward by ward approach would be the best solution.

Councillor Birch was pleased to note that the police were using Section 61 notices, and asked if they would continue to be proactive. Councillor King pointed out that the Chief Executive currently received daily updates from the police in respect of this.

In relation to the implications for NBC of the court upholding a challenge to Bromley Council's traveller ban, Councillor King stated that NBC's legal team were in agreement with

the current arrangements.

Councillor Eldred pointed out that there was a stop-gap traveller site at Ecton. He also reported that Plymouth Council had previously been one of the areas worst affected by unauthorised encampments. However, as a result of employing bailiffs, acting in a professional rather than forceful manner, they now had one of the lowest levels of unauthorised encampments in the country. Could this approach be considered for NBC?

Councillor Larratt stated that the CTU provided an excellent service, had a good working relationship with travellers, and processed legal work quickly to get eviction notices. He considered that the CTU should be a 7 day a week operation in order to be able to undertake assessments in a more timely manner.

Councillor Hadland expressed concern that social media evidence suggested Northamptonshire was viewed as a soft touch by travellers. A robust approach was needed.

Councillor Nunn suggested there should be further officer investigation into the cost and viability of a 24/7 CTU operation, and confirmed that the existing arrangements would now continue until 31 March 2021 (rather than 2020 as stated in 1.1).

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed that Northampton Borough Council enter into an arrangement with Northamptonshire County Council to discharge the powers under sections 77 and 78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and Part 55 of the County Court Procedure Rules, in relation to unauthorised occupation of land within Northampton Borough Council's area and for it to arrange for delegation of those powers to specified officers of the County Council.

9. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER – JEYES JETTY

Councillor King as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and pointed out that Jeyes Jetty had been a problem area for anti-social behaviour for a number of years.

Councillor Larratt noted that the issue had been raised by Overview and Scrutiny in 2015 and it was encouraging to see progress being made. There were successful precedents of gating in other towns, such as Market Harborough.

RESOLVED:

2.1

- a) Cabinet approved a 12 week statutory public consultation on the proposal to make a Public Spaces Protection Order (see Appendix 1 of the report) that will gate the public highway known as Jeyes Jetty, between The Drapery and College Street, Northampton; and
- b) Cabinet agreed to receive a further report, following completion of the statutory public consultation, which considers any representations received and, if appropriate, seeks approval of the Public Spaces Protection Order.

10. RECTORY FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE - EXTENSION

Councillor Hadland as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report seeking approval to appoint the main construction contractor to improve the facilities at Rectory Farm Community Centre. The timescale was tight, with work planned to start during the school summer holiday.

Councillor McCutcheon welcomed the project, but expressed concern at the risks associated with delegation to an individual. In response, it was pointed out that there would be consultation with the Borough Secretary and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and normal processes of tenders and due diligence would be followed – although due to tight timescales, the decision would not come back to Cabinet for approval.

Councillor Larratt expressed congratulations to those responsible for negotiating the release of the covenant, facilitating the newly-established Co-op on the site of the pub and reinvesting in the community.

Councillor Hill was delighted that the project was to proceed, since it would bring great benefit to the community.

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Economy, Assets and Culture, in consultation with the Borough Secretary and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to finalise the contract terms and appoint the main construction contractor for the Rectory Farm Community Centre project, within the approved budget sum of £250,000.

The meeting concluded at 6:25 pm