

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 15 June 2020

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD REMOTELY AT <https://www.youtube.com/user/northamptonbcTV> ON MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2020 AT 6:30 PM WHEN THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS IS PROPOSED TO BE TRANSACTED

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES.

To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Council held on 9 March 2020 and the Meeting of Annual Council held on 21 May 2020.

3. APOLOGIES.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Birch to make a statement on "Lessons learnt so far on the Covid 19 Crisis"

9. NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

- i) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor Meredith to second:

“Over the last three months Council staff have worked hard with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to meet increased demand for services and in particular to give support to the vulnerable and families in most need..

There will come a time when we will need to review what has gone well and what could have been done better but I believe now is the time for us as, elected representatives to say thank you to everyone at NBC and to our contractors and partners, for the job they do on behalf of our community.

Mr Mayor may I ask if you will lead us as we show our appreciation in the usual way.”

- ii) Councillor Smith to propose and Councillor T Eales to second:

“The recent resolution at Cabinet to pass the Homelessness Rough Sleeping and Action Plan 2020, represents a huge amount of collaborative work and investigation completed on Homeless in Northampton over the past five years.

The resolution also follows a remarkable shift in the challenge of tackling entrenched rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic. The support made available for rough sleepers and NBC’s quick and robust response transformed the look and approach to rough sleeping in Northampton. Rough sleepers being offered good quality accommodation in line with the principles of Housing First, excellent communication between different agencies and the placement of organisations where people were living created an environment in which people felt supported and empowered to access help allowing them to move on from rough sleeping.

As the situation with Covid-19 evolves and changes, it is vital that the excellent progress in the rough sleeping approach seen during it is not lost and that the new strategy is able to meet its full potential. The Cabinet papers recognise that the continuation of this strategy in its current form requires the continued input of the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative funding created out of the government’s Homelessness Reduction Scheme. It is vital that the government continue to provide this funding, as its loss or reduction would have a detrimental impact on NBC’s ability to continue to deliver, develop and grow this strategy.

Therefore:

This council recognises and applauds the work completed by the NBC Housing Team, its partners from other agencies and the wider voluntary sector, together with the Overview and Scrutiny panels. progressing the new, transformative homelessness strategy.

This council resolves to write to the West Northants MPs to ensure that the government continues to fund this vital body of work.”

- iii) Councillor Nunn to propose and Councillor Stone to second:

‘That this Council, under, and in pursuance of the powers conferred by virtue of Section 249

Local Government Act, 1972, proposes that the local National Health Service be recommended for admission into the Freedom of the Borough of Northampton, in recognition and appreciation of the outstanding services rendered to the residents of the town during the COVID19 Emergency.

This will be done through the immediate establishment of a cross-party working group and a subsequent report recommending how this honour should to be granted, followed by a Special Meeting of the Council where it will be voted on.'

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

George Candler – Chief Executive
The Guildhall
Northampton

Public Participation

1. Comments and Petitions

A member of the public (or an accredited representative of a business ratepayer of the Borough) may make a comment or present a petition on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. A comment or presentation of a petition shall be for no more than three minutes. No notice of the nature of the comment to be made or of the petition is required except for the need to register to speak by 12 noon on the day of the meeting. Once registered to speak, an invitation will be sent to join the Zoom video conferencing webinar for this meeting.

(Public comments and petitions will not be taken and the Annual Council Meeting or other civic or ceremonial meetings.)

NOTES

- i. Comments may be on one or more subjects but each person has no longer than three minutes to have their say.*
- ii. The same person may make a comment and present a petition on different subjects. In such instances that person will have three minutes to make their comment and a separate three minutes to present a petition.*

2. Member and Public Questions

- 2.1 A member of the public (or business ratepayer of the Borough) may ask a maximum of two written questions at each meeting, each limited to a maximum of 50 words, on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers. Each question shall:
- be submitted in writing and delivered, e-mailed to Democratic Services no later than 10.00am seven calendar days before the day of the meeting; and
 - include the name and address of the questioner and the name of the Cabinet member/Committee Chair to whom the question is put.
- 2.2 At the meeting, copies of all questions and the responses to them from the public and Members will be made available to the public and press. The Mayor may allow one supplementary question, without notice, that arises directly from the original question or response.

(Questions will not be taken at the Annual Council Meeting or at civic or ceremonial meetings or meetings called to deal with specific items of business.)

NOTES

In respect of paragraph 2.1 above, questions may be rejected on certain grounds that are set out on page 4-12 of the Council's Constitution and which may be viewed at www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1919 or by seeking advice using the contact details below.

3. Motions

3.1 A member of the public may register to speak to a motion under the 'Notices of Motion' item on the agenda. Registration to speak must be made to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the day to the meeting. Speaking to a motion is restricted to three minutes per person. . Once registered to speak, an invitation will be sent to join the Zoom video conferencing webinar for this meeting.

(The 'Notices of Motion' item will not be taken at the Annual Council meeting or meetings called for civic or ceremonial purposes.)

4. General

A member of the public may make a comment, present a petition, ask a question or speak to a motion at the same meeting subject to the restrictions set out above.

5. Contacts

Democratic Services: e-mail democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk

Tel 01604 837722

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The Guildhall
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MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 9 March 2020 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Malpas, Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Choudary, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Kilby-Shaw, Smith, Stone, Walker and Roberts

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2020 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cali, Caswell, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, Eldred, Hill, G Eales, T Eales, Graystone and Sargeant.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor highlighted several events and occasions that had recently taken place, including raising the Commonwealth flag and International Women's Day. The Mayor commented that he and Councillor Ansell had spent 4 days in Northampton's twinned town of Marburg, Germany and thanked the town's Mayor, Dr Thomas Spies, for his hospitality during the visit.

Councillor Ansell thanked the Mayor for his invitation, noting that he did not get the chance to go during his Mayoral year. Councillor Ansell commented that he and the Mayor were very well looked after.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Jean Lineker addressed Council and commented that as a disabled person, she felt let down by Northampton Partnership Homes; she did not feel that the organisation had enough staff to carry out its duties. Mrs Lineker had been advised by Contact Centre staff that she needed to change light bulbs in her property herself but added that she would need to use a ladder to reach them - she did not feel comfortable doing so as a disabled person. She explained that there were many people in the same situation as her and implored the Council to do more for its disabled residents.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 9 questions had been received from Councillors 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 relating to question 1, Councillor Hallam stated that he would be happy to prepare annual reports showing anticipated costs relating to the environmental services contract.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor King advised councillors to look at crime statistics nationally and highlighted the action plan contained in her report, advising that it detailed outline priorities for the year.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor King advised that community groups were struggling to find food for holiday provision; there were issues around targeting certain groups that needed to, and were being worked out.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 7, Councillor Nunn confirmed that the Council did take note of public consultation results and did with regard to the Community Governance Review.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor Hallam advised that approximately 500 properties per day were registering for the paid garden waste collections; the Council were due to meet their target by the end of March.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 9, Councillor Hallam reiterated that the target for tree-planting was 2030.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn submitted his report as Leader of the Council and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, the Leader confirmed that voluntary organisations across the town were very much involved in the unitary process and regarding the St James Mill Link Road, the Leader explained that several businesses that were previously keen on investing, were no longer. With regard to the COVID-19 outbreak, it was explained that councillors had been updated, weekly working groups were taking place and advice for staff was “stay home if you are sick” and regarding the upcoming elections, the Leader advised that the risk was high, and the Council were awaiting advice from the Government. In response to further questions, the Leader commented that NBC had a strong voice regarding the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and would arrange a briefing to update Members, or build the update into a previously arranged briefing. The Leader confirmed that Committee reports now included a section relating to environmental/climate implications. The Leader further confirmed that briefings would be arranged in respect of the St James Mill Link Road and COVID-19.

Councillor Larratt submitted his report as Deputy Leader and highlighted the salient points. In response to questions, Councillor Larratt agreed to look at alternative ways to hold training sessions to enable more councillors to take part. Regarding the dispute between NBC, Daventry District Council and the Council's previous environmental services contractor, Councillor Larratt stated that the Monitoring Officer was prepared to give a briefing to fully update Members on progress made. Councillor Larratt explained that training around Section 106 Agreements had been delayed, however all new Town and Parish Councillors would be included. He explained that payment of the Council's debts would be funded through grants and re-paid to the Borough.

Councillor Hadland submitted a report on behalf of Councillor Hill, Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning, and highlighted the salient points. In response to a question, Councillor Hadland explained that the delay in introducing Article 4 Direction across the borough was for potential house-buyers in the town to change their plans if needed.

Councillor Hadland submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and highlighted the salient points. He confirmed that the Market Square remained a priority, noting that the £25m Government grant was the Council's best chance to finance the project. Councillor Hadland explained that the Sixfields stand was at the forefront of the Council's considerations regarding the Football Club; nothing further would be agreed until the stand was completed.

In response to a question relating to the removal of flood alarms near the 4 Waterside development, Councillor Hadland explained that this was the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Smith made a statement on "Housing" and noted the increasing number of rough sleepers in the town. She stated that rogue landlords within the private sector were making people homeless. She further stated that landlords were exploiting loopholes in legislation to exploit tenants and questioned who at the Council was monitoring these loopholes. Councillor Smith commented that the demand for social housing had doubled in recent years and yet temporary accommodation was a £1 billion industry. She stated the Council needed a housing policy that benefitted tenants, not landlords.

Councillor Hibbert commented that the Council had an effective strategy for getting rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation and advised that the Council were targeting bad landlords, noting that a Special Operations unit had identified 200 breaches of housing regulations in the town. Councillor Hibbert commented that numerous social housing projects were underway in Northampton and that Northampton Partnership Homes had been rated "outstanding" by the Centre for Housing and Support.

Councillor Smith commented that the Council had a significant temporary accommodation bill and still could not find homes for all in the town who needed one; she stated that it was the Council's duty to house those in need, and stated the need

for an easier way to report rogue landlords.

9. UPDATE ON CARRIED MOTIONS

Councillor Larratt presented the Carried Motions report to Council. The format had been amended to include the responsible officers and Councillor Larratt assured Members that updates would be provided for all motions that did not currently have one.

Councillor Larratt advised that the List of Carried Motions was available online and asked Members to contact Democratic Services for a larger, printed version.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

At this point the Mayor called for the report's recommendations to be voted upon. All Members voted in favour. The recommendations in the report were agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. Council noted the update on Carried Motions.
2. That a further update will be brought to full Council at its meeting on 14 September 2020

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Stone advised that the Labour Group wished to withdraw the motion.

Council agreed.

11. 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

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

Thursday, 21 May 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Choudary (Chair); Councillor Sargeant (Deputy Chair); Councillors Malpas, Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Golby, Graystone, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Joyce, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, B Markham, M Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Smith, Stone and Walker

The Mayor announced that Councillor John Caswell had died recently and as a mark of respect invited all those present to join him in a minute's silence.

Councillor Golby then paid tribute Councillor Caswell, who had been both a friend and respected colleague to him. He had been both a Borough and Parish Councillor (for Duston Parish Council) and Mayor of Northampton for the year 2014-2015. Amongst many duties, Councillor Caswell had been a long serving Member of the Licensing Committee. Councillor Golby acknowledged that Councillor Caswell had been the driving force behind the Pendle Road Community Centre. He added, that in his opinion, the Pendle Road Community Centre should be renamed the John Caswell Centre. Councillor Golby concluded that Councillor Caswell had been both a family man and a Politician.

Councillor Stone paid tribute to Councillor Caswell. She referred to the photograph of him on both the Northampton Borough Council and Duston Parish Council websites commented how well these photos represented him. She concluded her tribute commenting that Councillor Caswell was a very able "people" person.

Councillor Beardsworth paid tribute to Councillor Caswell. She advised that she had known Councillor Caswell for many years and served with him on the Licensing Committee. Councillor Beardsworth recognised the support that Councillors' partners give to them and conveyed her condolences to Mrs Caswell, his children and grandchildren. Councillor Beardsworth concluded her tribute by agreeing that it should be considered that the Pendle Road Community Centre is renamed the Caswell Centre.

1. ELECTION OF NEW MAYOR

Councillor Lane proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded "That Councillor Brian W Sargeant be elected Mayor of the Borough of Northampton for the ensuing year".

The motion was carried and Councillor Brian W Sargeant was appointed Mayor and accepted office by making and delivering to the Chief Executive, the Declaration of Acceptance to Office.

The Mayor then took the Chair.

3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor Patel seconded “That Councillor Rufia Ashraf be appointed to the office of Deputy Mayor”.

The motion was carried and Councillor Ashraf was appointed Deputy Mayor and accepted office by making and delivering to the Chief Executive, the Declaration of Acceptance to Office.

2. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING MAYOR

Councillor Marriott proposed and Councillor Stone seconded; “That the thanks of the Council be given to Councillor Nazim Choudary and Maroof Iftikhar for the able and courteous manner in which they have discharged their duties as Mayor and Mayoress”.

The motion was carried.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Roberts.

6. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP

Councillor Lane announced that Councillor Nunn be appointed Leader of the Conservative Group and that Councillor Larratt be appointed deputy Leader of the Conservative Group.

7. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR GROUP

Councillor Russell announced that Councillor Stone be appointed Leader of the Labour Group and that Councillor Birch be appointed deputy Leader of the Labour Group.

8. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP

Councillor B Markham announced that Councillor Beardsworth be appointed Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and that Councillor Meredith be appointed deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

9. COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Mayor announced that the meetings of the Council would take place on 15 June 2020, 20 July 2020, 14 September 2020, 2 November 2020, 18 January 2021, 22 February 2021 and 8 March 2021.

10. COMMITTEE PROPORTIONALITY

Councillor Nunn submitted a report which sought Council’s approval of the group proportionality of seats of each Committee.

Councillor Larratt seconded adoption of the report.

RESOLVED:

- . That the number of seats on each Committee as set out in the report be approved.
- l. That the representation of the political groups be as set out in this report.

11. CABINET

Councillor Nunn announced the appointments made to Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet for 2020/2021 as set out in the report.

12. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought approval for the appointment to Committees for the ensuing year.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Russell proposed and Councillor Stone seconded that Councillor Cali is a member of the Planning Committee in place of Councillor Joyce.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment of Councillor Cali being a member of the Planning Committee, the appointments to Committees for 2020/2021 as set out in the report be confirmed.

13. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought approval for the appointment to Charities and Outside Bodies for 2020/2021.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Russell proposed and Councillor Stone seconded that Councillor Duffy is a member of the Northamptonshire Police, Crime and Fire Panel in place of Councillor G Eales.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to Councillor Duffy being a member of the East Northamptonshire Police, Crime and Fire Panel in place of Councillor G Eales, the appointments to Charities and Outside Bodies be approved.

14. CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Nunn proposed the Consultation Appointments as set out at item 14 of the agenda.

Councillor Larratt seconded the adoption of the Consultation Appointments.

Councillor Russell proposed, and Councillor Stone seconded, that Councillor Marriott is included in the membership of Civic Matters, in place of Councillor McCutcheon.

RESOLVED:

That subject to Councillor Marriott being included in the membership of Civic Matters, in place of Councillor McCutcheon, the Consultation Appointments, as set out in the report, be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 12:08 pm

Questions for Full Council Monday 15th June, 2020

Question 1

Cllr. Duffy to Cllr. Hallam.

Does the portfolio for the Environment agree with me that the tree policy needs to be amended to include lopping because of the nuisance caused to residents when trees that are too near to housing.

Response

Northampton Borough Councils tree policy includes a section to keep clear houses and brick built structures such as garages by two metres, this is beyond any legal requirements. This requirement is also part of our current environmental services contract specification with Veolia, and is included in the Trees frequently asked questions sheet point two (Trees FAQ Sheet, attached for reference).

**Cllr M Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment**

Questions for Full Council Monday 15th June, 2020

Question 2

Cllr. Duffy to Cllr. King

With the advent of West Northants Unitary and the importance of local voices should we be working with RAs and community groups to encourage them to Zoom?

Response

We have resumed our community neighbourhood working groups, community safety meetings and several of our meetings with our partners and our community and voluntary groups. i.e. our youth providers meeting, Pride partner meeting, youth forum, park management committees etc. All have been established using the zoom platform. If there are any groups that require further support or are finding the platform a barrier to engagement, we would be happy to provide support.

Cllr A King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Questions for Full Council Monday 15th June, 2020

Question 3

Cllr. Duffy to Cllr. King.

THORPLANDS is suffering from rising violent crime and there are no cctv to assist police. Why is the town centre covered by cctv but there is none in the Eastern district- I am told there is a data protection issues but cctv is vital for good policing.

Response

Tackling Violent Crime is a key priority for the community safety partnership and across the Borough. Northampton Borough Council is working closely with the police and partners to deliver a range of initiatives. We adopt a problem-solving approach in our higher crime areas and look at what longer term solutions can be put in place, whilst CCTV plays an important role in tackling crime, additional CCTV coverage on the East of the Town is not something that the Police have put forward as a solution to tackling the violent crime issues that are taking place.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner introduced new standards around protecting the public privacy and all Councils. CCTV operators have had to check all their cameras to confirm they were compliant with the revised standards "Privacy for the Public Impact Requirements"

The Council reviewed its aging stock and found several CCTV cameras failed to meet the new privacy standards and therefore they had to be switched off. These included two at the Thorplands shops. However, as part of the housing redevelopment in the area two new cameras were purchased and operational monitoring of the shopping areas and building site has been put in place.

Cllr A King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Questions for Full Council Monday 15th June, 2020

Question 4

Cllr. Birch to Cllr. King.

As we start to emerge from Lockdown we have to assess the changing needs of our residents and communities. What continuing support is there for local voluntary organisations and all the new volunteers whose work will be even more vital? .

Response

We have had over 600 individual volunteers and 126 groups register to support the work of the community resilience cell in Northampton. Regular liaison with these groups has been in place from the outset and a decision to match volunteers to the groups, to strengthen our community and voluntary groups was taken early in the process.

As part of the community resilience work, a recovery plan is being developed, A questionnaire has gone out to the groups/volunteers to establish their experiences and future needs. Working closely with the local infrastructure organisations, including Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire, Northampton Community Foundation and ACRE, we will ensure that the appropriate support is in place for these groups, we are aware that many of the new groups want to continue and the local infrastructure organisations are working with them to ensure they have the appropriate governance and support arrangements in place going forward.

Cllr A King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Questions for Full Council Monday 15th June, 2020

Question 5

Cllr. Ansell to Cllr. Hallam.

Since the government relaxed the rules for members of the public to use public parks, they have become increasingly popular. For example, in the first week after the easing of lockdown restrictions Abington Park, which falls partly within my ward, collected 2.62 tonnes of rubbish, normally, at the busiest time of summer it would be 0.75 tonnes. Many friends and families have come together to meet after months of lockdown bringing with them picnics to enjoy in this much loved premier park.

However, there are no toilet facilities within the 118 acres of parkland causing visitors to urinate inappropriately and unhygienically wherever they can. I understand the lower toilets near the swings were vandalised before lockdown and the ones near the bowling green have sewer problems.

Could the Portfolio Holder please advise me why the lockdown period was not used to carry out maintenance and to undertake repair work on these toilets?

Furthermore, what plans are in place under the present Covid-19 pandemic to make the toilets safe and ready for use when they do open in this current climate?

I understand there will be many complications and restrictions in these uncertain times, nevertheless, toilet facilities are a public necessity. To have no toilet facilities in the town's busiest park brings shame onto this council.

Other authorities, such as Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, have already opened many of their toilet facilities, albeit for reduced hours. If others can do it for so many, can the Portfolio Holder please explain why Northampton can't for so few?

Response

Thank you very much Cllr Ansell for your support in relation to highlighting the challenges which the recent unprecedented levels of footfall have brought to our parks and I appreciate your time and input into how the Council responds to these challenges.

The lockdown period could not be used to carry out maintenance and undertake repair works as the Parks were closed on Government advice and all non-essential travel was banned.

As part of our preparations for the further easing of restrictions we have worked closely with the other Local Authorities in Northamptonshire so that we continue to be consistent on a Countywide basis. All have kept their Park toilet facilities closed until this weekend and have been closely monitoring. The health and safety of both visitors and staff, and preventing the spread of COVID-19 continues to be our main priority.

Those LAs outside of Northamptonshire that have opened some public toilets are not opening them all and those that are open have reduced opening hours and have to be closed on a regular basis for deep cleaning and sanitisation. Scientific evidence and advice is that urinals cannot currently be used.

Questions for Full Council Monday 15th June, 2020

Question 6

Cllr. Ansell to Cllr. Hallam.

Billing Road Cemetery falls within my ward of Abington and has many notable characters of the town's past. One being Caroline Chisholm, who the Catholic Church have proposed to recognise as a Saint for her humanitarian work. Through my councillor empowerment fund, I was pleased to contribute to the restoration of her grave along with attending the rededication service at the cemetery. There have also been past Bishops along with Nuns from the Notre-Dame buried there. Furthermore, there is a beautiful white horse memorial that commemorates numerous members of the Fosset family who had their Circus winter headquarters along the Harlestone Road. It also has 'Commonwealth War Graves' within its grounds.

The Council's grounds maintenance contractor does an excellent job in maintaining the inside area of Billing Road Cemetery, which I commended them for at a recent overview and scrutiny meeting.

However, the hedge bordering the cemetery along Billing Road is an eyesore. Other such hedges in the area, such as that on the frontage of the ON's sports pitches, are far better maintained and are much better in appearance. The state of the hedge does not reflect well on the Council.

The Cemetery hedge looks unkempt and in great need of being trimmed. Also, there is a great deal of other vegetation growing within the hedge adding to its dishevelled appearance.

I believe that the hedge is regarded as shrubbery within our Grounds Maintenance Contract, thereby only being cut back once a year, where in fact it is an ornamental privet hedge.

Advice on the Royal Horticultural Society's web site is that privet hedges should be trimmed two or three times during the growing season. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=352> Similar advice is found on other such web sites.

Will the Portfolio Holder please:

- Arrange for the Billing Road Cemetery hedge to be trimmed as a matter of urgency before the end of the month?
- Arrange for vegetation that is growing through privet hedge to be cut down to ground level as a matter of urgency before the end of the month?
- Ensure that once removed, the vegetation growing through the privet hedge is treated and eradicated so that it does not return?
- Ensure that the hedge is trimmed at least twice a year throughout the growing season, including at the end of the growing season to maintain a good appearance throughout the winter, in accordance with professional advice, such as that of the Royal Horticultural Society?
- Vary the specification for the maintenance of Billing Road Cemetery hedge, and any other privet hedges across the Borough, in our Grounds Maintenance Contract to ensure that they are considered and maintained as ornamental hedges and not

just as shrubbery, kept free of growth other than privet, and are trimmed at least twice a year during, including at the end of the growing season, in this and future years?

Response

Thank you Cllr Ansell for raising the issues with the Billing Road cemetery hedge. This was previously annually maintained which was recognised as not frequent enough and is now scheduled for twice a year which is in accordance with the professional advice. The other hedges along the road are privately owned and therefore may receive a higher level of maintenance than that provided by the council's contract specification which needs to ensure value for money and a consistent standard.

The two cuts which are scheduled allow for nesting birds and take place in the summer and winter.

The works for this summer are scheduled for week commencing 29th June. The hedge will be checked for nesting birds and some areas of the hedge will need to be left and cut when the birds have left. The team will monitor and cut areas as soon as possible if this occurs.

This winter, the hedge will be cut back hard and a full clearance of any self-set and brambles etc will take place and the areas treated or eco-plugged. This will strengthen the structure of the hedge and improve the appearance for the future. The work undertaken in the winter will appear harsh and it will take 2-3 years for the hedge to grow back to full strength

To vary the specification for the maintenance will obviously attract additional cost although we can survey and review areas on a case by case basis to identify where an ornamental style of management is required to be 'in keeping' with the area. I have asked that this particular hedge is evaluated accordingly.

Cllr M Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment

Report of the Leader of the Council



Northampton Borough Council

Monday 15th June 2020

Since my last report to Council I have continued to work with the Cabinet, Members, the Chief Executive and Officers across all areas of the Council albeit virtually, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in Cabinet colleagues' reports.

Covid-19

The way that we work was fundamentally changed with the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic worldwide and has had a significant impact on the way that I have undertaken business since we all decanted from the Guildhall on Monday 23rd March. Whilst we have all adapted incredibly well to this new way of working- through either telephone meetings or more recently Zoom video conferencing, which appears to be the 'new normal'- at the time it was a fundamental shift. Not least, asking nearly 400 staff as well as Elected Members to leave the Guildhall and not to return for the foreseeable future, following government guidelines, seemed like an extraordinary thing to have to do. However, our staff responded positively, and as it has turned out, this was just one of a huge number of extraordinary things that our staff colleagues have now done during this crisis.

I would like to formally pay tribute to every single member of our staff, both those employed directly and those working to deliver our services within our partner organisations, for the way in which they have been able to keep services to our residents running, and the additional things that they have all been required to do in order to make the council's response to covid 19 highly effective. Throughout my time as Leader of this council I have continually been impressed by daily examples of dedication and hard work, but what I and member colleagues have witnessed during the past few weeks has been incredible, and extremely proud.

My role in those initial weeks was to remain close to the Chief Executive and the Strategic Command Group that had been established for the council, as well as the lead officers that led on the Tactical Command Group who, between them, were able to provide me with daily updates on both what was happening in terms of guidelines coming from Central Government and how that was effecting not just the Borough Council but the wider community of Northampton and how we responded to that. Of particular note was the way that we worked incredibly quickly over 72 hours to move 71 rough sleepers and former rough sleepers off the streets and into secure accommodation, and establishing in just under a week a Borough-wide approach to shielding and protecting those most vulnerable in our community as part of a wider Countywide Community Resilience Cell. To date, over 646 volunteers and 126 organisations have stepped forward and 911 people have been supported.

I am also aware that, as a Borough Council, we have contributed significantly to the wider Countywide efforts, with involvement at the Strategic Command Group Countywide on (again in the early weeks) a daily basis- but now into a more settled twice-weekly approach.

I have taken a specific interest in the Business Grants scheme, whereby Northampton had £37m of Business Grants to give out to those businesses that qualified over a number of weeks. I have subsequently been involved in the second round Discretionary Grant Scheme, which launched on 1st June, whereby a further £1.7m will be distributed to a range of qualifying businesses, most particularly those who are direct business rates payers such as those in shared work spaces.

As we now start to move towards Recovery, and as the lockdown measures start to be lifted, I am playing an active role not just as a Board member on the Business Improvement District Board, but also as part of the wider Northampton Town Centre Task Force, looking at how we enable non-essential retail businesses to open safely from 15th June, seeking to ensure that the public feel safe when returning to the town centre, whilst still observing the Government guidelines relating to social distancing.

The pandemic has affected the way that we all work, not least in terms of governance and how we ensure that key projects and activities continue through the decision-making process that we have here within the Council. Since mid-March I am pleased to say that we have had 3 Cabinet meetings, all conducted through video conferencing, as well as Annual Council in May, in which we thanked the outgoing Mayor Cllr Nazim Choudhary as well as welcoming in the Mayor for the 2020/21 year, Cllr Brian Sargeant. It was an event that was a first for all of us, however it worked wonderfully well and my thanks go to both the Democratic Service team and colleagues in the Mayor's office for ensuring that the event passed without any glitches.

Future Northants Activity

In light of the pandemic, initially work around the Future Northants activity (which was increasing week by week in the first half of the calendar year) paused for a number of weeks as understandably officer's attention was focussed on the Covid-19 activity. In light of this, the programme had to be reviewed and the original Prospectus For Change- focussing on a wide variety of transformational activity- has had to be curtailed into a new programme that was launched in May. The focus is now on 'Safe and Legal Plus', and is very much about ensuring we do the key elements to transfer into the new West Northants Council on 1st April 2021, but still allows a level of transformational activity to take place, particularly around the Health and Adult Social Care Integration plans, and also the formation of the Children's Trust.

Changes to the Structural Changes Order have also been confirmed and, as a result, all 45 Elected Members of Northampton Borough Council are now concurrently Members of the West Northants Shadow Authority, which held its inaugural Council Meeting on Tuesday 2nd June 2020. As you will no doubt be aware, I am now Deputy Leader of that Authority, working alongside Phil Larratt, who is the other NBC representative on the Executive, plus six further Members from the authorities of the County Council, South Northants Council and Daventry District Council.

The Governance structure has also changed as a result, with the Joint Committee no longer in operation now that the West Northants Authority is in place and an Executive formed. Going forward there will be Executive meetings made up of the 8 Members of the 4 authorities that will make the majority of decisions in helping to create the new West Northants Council between now and 1st April 2021; our first meeting is on 9th June 2020.

Supporting these will be the Joint Implementation Executive, where both Executives of the West and North Northants Shadow Authorities come together on a monthly basis to consider and hear updates on the programme, and these are now taking place. I have also, alongside the other Leaders making up the West Northants Shadow Authority, been involved in the recruitment of the Statutory Interim positions of Head of Paid Service, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer for the Shadow Authority. As some of you may know, George Candler- our Chief Executive here- was successful in securing that role. I know that you will join me in congratulating him, and wishing him every success in undertaking those duties in the coming months. We have therefore taken the opportunity to strengthen the resilience of the Senior Management team, and I have been involved, alongside members of the Appointments & Appeals Committee, in recruiting an Interim Chief Executive into the Senior Team, to pick up some of George's responsibilities.

Alongside all of this activity, the Chief Executive and I have also managed to meet with the Commissioners at the County Council, which is always useful in hearing how progress is being made to ensure that the County Council is in as strong a position as possible ahead of unitary. Similarly, I have also been involved in a Q&A session for Town and Parish Councils in the last few weeks, as again it is important that they are kept up to speed with developments with the Future Northants activity as we progress towards 1st April 2021.

Economic Growth

It's just over 18 months since Northampton Forward was first established and during that time an awful lot of work has been undertaken. Shortly after the Board was formed, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched the Future High Street Fund and we were subsequently successful in the summer of 2019 in getting through the first stage and in with an opportunity to secure up to £25m for regeneration purposes. I am pleased to say that, even though we have had challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Northampton Forward Board has met on 4 occasions since mid-March, not least because we need to ensure that the final Strategic Business Case is submitted on time. We will know the outcome of how successful our bid has been later on in the summer.

Now our attention turns to the Towns Fund, a similar scheme where we have the opportunity to bid for up to £25m, although the scope is broader than just Regeneration, including Connectivity (for example improving Cycle networks) as well as the wider Skills agenda. The first stage of the process that we will be focussing on will be the development of the Towns Fund Investment Plan, which we are beginning work on this month. As part of the Skills agenda, myself and the Chief Executive have also taken the opportunity to meet with the Principals of both Northampton College and Moulton

College, and I am pleased to say that the Skills sector will be represented by these Further Education representatives on the Towns Fund Board going forward.

I have already referenced the involvement of the Business Improvement District as part of kick-starting the economy in the Town centre, and more recently I have also had the opportunity to work with the Federation of Small Businesses in Northamptonshire, and attended a Q&A session centred around the Town centre and also covid business grants, again demonstrating our commitment to the wider economic recovery of the Town and supporting our businesses wherever possible.

Sub-regional Activities

As in most areas of our work, the Sub-regional meetings did pause during the months of March and April, however since May my involvement in a number of key areas has continued, including attendance at the two SEMLEP Board meetings as well as their Finance, Risk and Audit Board. More recently I have attended the Arc Leaders Board and the Central Area Growth Board- all key strands of the wider Growth agenda and ensuring that Northampton's voice is heard, to ensure that both our strategic focus is reflected in the wider Sub-regional Growth agenda as well as helping to shape the regional agenda as the Government looks to focus more attention outside of London in the coming months.

Other Activities

As you may have seen from Annual Council, I have recently joined the Hope Centre Board. Prior to this, the dialogue with the Chair Ben Leadsom and the CEO Robin Burgess, alongside the Chief Executive and Director of Housing & Wellbeing, has remained positive. Back in March we took the opportunity to visit Oasis House and explore ways in which we could foster closer working relationships between both the Hope Centre and the Local Authority. Little did we know that, just a matter of weeks later, this working relationship would be further cemented as we worked with partners within the Homelessness Housing Forum to ensure the 70+ rough sleepers were put into safe accommodation.

In terms of events, as you can imagine most of these have had to be postponed, the exception being the splendid VE Day celebrations on Friday 8th May, which were conducted virtually. Again the Borough Council played an important part as one of the partners in contributing toward the celebrations, which I enjoyed throughout the day through the power of the internet.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn

Leader of the Council

Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council



Northampton Borough Council

Monday 15th June 2020

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have continued to play an active role in the establishment of a Unitary Council and the transition to it as a member of the Shadow Executive, while continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council. I can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

Due to the pandemic the market was forced to close to all but fresh food stalls in late March. During this time only our butcher, Hung Vo fruit and veg and one takeaway café chose to continue to provide a vital retail service, especially by supplying fresh produce to their customers.

On 2nd June the market reopened to all traders and they are tentatively returning with the appropriate social distancing and additional hygiene measures in place to protect themselves and their customers. We will continue to work closely with our traders to ensure we adapt to government guidelines as they evolve.

In addition, the discretionary grant funding has been extended to our market traders at this difficult time.

Councillor Development Group

Since the March 2020, due to the Covid 19 lockdown, meetings of the Council and Committees have taken place remotely over Zoom.

Intensive training regarding Zoom has been provided to Members and practice sessions have taken place prior to meetings over Zoom.

The Democratic Services Team has worked very closely with the Legal Services Team in interpreting and implementing the new law on virtual Council Meetings and Committees so that they have ran in accordance with the government's remote hearing regulations.

The Democratic Services Team has successfully hosted several remote meetings, including the Annual Council Meeting which involved our new Mayor being gowned and wearing his chains. A lot of background work goes into the staging of the remote meetings that Democratic Services have hosted. Cabinet and Planning Committees have also successfully run, again being hosted by the Democratic Services Team

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Democratic Services and Legal staff for all their hard work in delivering the transition to Zoom enabling the Council to continue the democratic process in accordance with legislation. I would also like to thank them for the delivery of training and practice sessions. Thanks also to Councillor Jamie Lane for his assistance with Zoom training. Their patience is very much appreciated!

My thanks must also go to our IT personnel for all their support in ensuring the smooth operation of our IT systems.

No other training for Members has taken place since March, however,

- **S106 – What it is and how Members can become involved and engaged.** An external training provider has been contacted and remote training, over Zoom has been set for **21st July 2020** commencing at **5.00pm**. All Members are invited to participate in this training.
- Officers are continuing to work on potential sessions for Members around - **Gangs and Knife Crime** – information and video material shown to schools by the police will be provided to Members. It is expected that this will now take place later in the year.

Can Members wishing to attend any of these events please inform Tracy Tiff as soon as possible.

Legal Services

Legal Services have been very busy. Their activities, in addition to their work with Democratic Services have included:

- Completing the drafting of the constitution for the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority which was presented to the meeting of the Shadow Council on 2 June 2020 and approved.
- Advising multiple service areas about the implications of the Coronavirus Act and associated public health regulations on the provision of their service to the public.
- Advising private sector housing regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and charging five individuals with in excess of 50 HMO related offences.
- Continuing to progress criminal prosecutions already commenced whilst the criminal justice system is effectively suspended on a temporary basis.
- Working towards the LEXCEL standard which will assist clients and direct our resources on where they are needed. It will help us to achieve excellence in compliance and practice management.

Street Lighting

The streetlight project is progressing well and is currently on time and budget.

There are a couple of areas that need further investigation as the power supply appears to be being fed from a different / unknown source. We will have to release a

small part of our contingency to investigate this issue, but it shouldn't cause any time delays.

The draft maintenance contract from Balfour Beatty continues to be scrutinised by our officers and consultant. We still hope that this contract can be finalised and brought to Cabinet soon.

Rail Issues

No further meetings of the East West Rail Consortium have taken place since the lockdown began. However, work continues on the project, in particular with regard to the Bletchley flyover that has been partly dismantled to facilitate its refurbishment to accommodate East West Rail services.

Work is continuing on the England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport Strategy, and a report was presented at the May meeting of that organisation's Strategic Transport Forum. The draft Transport Strategy includes a section on improving East-West rail connectivity and makes particular reference to the benefits that improved East-West rail connectivity, in combination with the delivery of HS2, could have for North-South connectivity along key corridors such as Northampton – Milton Keynes / Bletchley - Aylesbury – Old Oak Common, linking these regionally significant hubs with wider economic opportunities and allowing easier access to Heathrow Airport. EEH envisage going out to public consultation on the Transport Strategy later this Summer.

Flooding

Following the flood event of 27th May 2018, and the subsequent receipt of Flood Investigation Reports, we commissioned a condition survey of all watercourses of ours within the Borough.

The survey has now been completed with updated drawings being provided. We will be inviting quotations to clear any areas highlighted in the report in order to move forward with a more managed programme for maintenance and flood mitigation.

Councillor Phil Larratt

Deputy Leader of the Council

Planning and Coronavirus Update

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown several changes have been made to planning and how it now operates. These are outlined below.

CIL and S106

- Developers with a turnover of less than £45m per annum can request a deferment of paying CIL or to introduce an instalment policy for CIL payments
- Local authorities should consider requests for delayed S106 payments in limited circumstances

Time limited PD Rights

- A new time limited emergency permitted development right came into force

Validation of Planning Applications

- Encourage applicants to submit applications for planning permission online and LPA's to continue to process applications remotely.

Determination timescales

- There is no change to the timescales for determining planning applications.
- NBC Planning Team have continued to process and determine applications within determination periods.

Publicity and consultation

- In addition to neighbour notification, site notices and press notices, other means of publicising planning applications can be adopted. This can include electronic options or use of social media.

Virtual Planning Committee

- To encourage LPA's to hold virtual planning committee meetings – two meetings have already successfully taken place.

Construction working hours

- LPA's should take a flexible approach to construction working hours and not unreasonably withhold permission to extend working hours on site.
- Any temporary changes to construction working hours conditions granted by local planning authorities should not extend beyond 13 May 2021.

This will be dealt with on case by case basis, taking account of the location of each development taking account of the guidance which adds; *Applications should only be refused where there are very compelling reasons such as significant impact on neighboring businesses or uses which are particularly sensitive to noise, dust or vibration, which cannot be overcome through other mitigation.*

Local Plans

- Progress on local plans to continue. Meetings with PINS can be arranged as virtual.

Neighbourhood plans

- No elections or referendums can take place before 6 May 2021.

Planning Policy

At its meeting of 10th June, Cabinet considered the revised Submission Draft of the Local Plan Part 2, Policies Map and Sustainability Appraisal for six weeks' public consultation commencing 13th July. Cabinet also considered a revised Local Development Scheme, which sets out the project plan for the process towards adoption of the plan and the designation of the area covered by Great Houghton Parish Council as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of the Parish Council producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Heritage

The team has continued to deal with all Development Management consultations relating to heritage and trees to time. All applications relating to Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas have also been dealt with to time.

The local list has been progressed: The Selection Panel has considered those buildings within the town centre and identified through conservation area reviews. There are a further 100 candidates yet to be considered. Public nominations have also been sought and approximately 100 have been submitted which will be considered by the panel in due course.

Planning (Development Management)

- Planning permission N/2019/1225 for the erection of 73 no. dwellings at the land rear of Hunsbury Park Primary School was granted on 25th March 2020, following the finalisation of a S106 agreement.
- Planning permission N/2018/1587 for the demolition of St James Works factory and the construction of 20 no. affordable dwellings at Vicarage Road was granted on 6th April 2020, following the finalisation of a S106 agreement.
- 100% performance for major, minor and other applications in March to April 2020.

Building Control

- Received 18 Full plan application March/April 2020.
- Received 60 Building Notices March/April 2020.
- Received and actioned 5 Dangerous Structures reports March/April 2020.
- Received to 68 notifications for the commencement of work March/April 2020
- Issued to date 53 completion certificates March/April 2020
- To date carried out 419 inspections (including virtual inspections) March/April 2020.
- 100% of inspections booked on the same day have been carried out (including virtual inspections) so far in March/April 2020.

Land Charges

We have a standard KPI, which we are not required to report on, to return local search within 10 working days, which we have met returning searches in 2-3 working days. We make daily updates to the LLPG Property Gazetteer and this is reported on monthly we currently have a rating of ANS – achieving national standard

Councillor James Hill
Cabinet Member for Planning

Environmental Services Contract

The Covid-19 Pandemic was truly unprecedented and I am really grateful for all of the hard work of all the refuse collection teams, drivers, street cleansing staff, grounds maintenance teams and administrative staff for their work in keeping the service running, pretty much as normal throughout the course of the lockdown. I was delighted to be able to participate in a clap and whoop organized to recognize their contribution as key workers on Radio Northampton.

As staff were forced to self-isolate team numbers came under particular pressure, particularly driver numbers, due to the qualifications needed to drive a refuse vehicle. Veolia switched staff from their commercial contracts, as the need for commercial collections reduced. We also made a decision that if waste collection services had to be removed, we would remove food waste collection services first due to it having the lowest level of take up of collection services. At the time of writing and after 10 weeks of lockdown, only 5x individual food rounds were removed due to staffing issues, which represents our only significant service disruption to date. A significantly better performance than some Councils who had whole sale service collection for multiple weeks during the lockdown.

As well as the pressure on staff numbers, staff themselves were collecting more waste than ever before due to the lockdown. A quick comparison of recycling tonnages shows a 20% increase in recycling rates tonnages collected, compared to the same period last year. This increase is on top of the roughly 6% year-on year increase we were already achieving since the change of contractor.

	Mar	Apr	Period Total
2019	2,065	3,369	9,930
2020	2,865	3,619	11,438

Cemeteries Team

The pandemic has meant that the team have been dealing with unprecedented circumstances for organizing burials in very challenging circumstances. There is also the potential of an increased need for local authority funerals as a result of the pandemic.

Chargeable Green Waste Subscriptions

At the time of writing there were 30,522 subscriptions well in excess of our initial target, representing an income of over £1,250,000 to the Council.

Project and Programmes

A great deal of current projects and programmes have had to be halted due to Covid19, however work has continued on many existing projects and the staff have also supported the Council response in a number of ways.

Parks & Open Spaces

The Park Rangers have been continuing with their normal maintenance checks and patrols around the parks. They have also been carrying out the standard repairs in the parks such as, replacing broken bollards, changing broken padlocks, repairing gates and replacing missing signs, etc.

The installation of play equipment from Section 106 and General Fund Capital continued until the Coronavirus hit Mid-March, then all the installations stopped.

The only project that could safely continue was the Delapre Park, Eagle Drive end footpath, as it wasn't safe to leave it partially constructed. The completed footpath fits in well with the surrounding area. The footpath has been installed to allow easy access to the lake from the Eagle Drive Car Park, by disabled or infirm people. Working with the fishing club, the footpath runs alongside fishing platforms that will be specifically redesigned for the disabled fisherpersons. This will be the only one in Northamptonshire to cater for the disabled driver / fisherperson.

Due to the lockdown, there were seven projects that were put on hold, which were:

- Lings play equipment
- Lings Trim Trail
- Kingsthorpe play equipment
- Hardingstone safety surface
- Dallington cemetery extension
- Abington Park lake repairs

However, since the easing of the lockdown, some of the installations are due to recommence from week commencing 1st June 2020.

Whilst the COVID 19 Government Restrictions are in place, the Park Rangers have been putting up signs around all the Parks and large Open Spaces to remind people about the Social Distancing rules. Currently, the play equipment remains closed, and the Park Rangers have had to disable as many moving parts on the play equipment as possible to try and discourage children from playing on them.

Neighbourhood Wardens

In Mid-March, due to COVID-19, the Neighbourhood Wardens helped the newly formed Local Resilience Cell to deliver food parcels and prescriptions to the vulnerable people that could not leave their homes due to the Coronavirus.

Some of the Neighbourhood Wardens also assisted the Environmental Health Department with COVID-19 enforcement / education to businesses within the town.

Air Quality Monitoring

Officers met with County Council colleagues to try to progress the issue with traffic modelling data for air quality modelling, these discussions are ongoing.

Air quality monitoring has been carried out for the majority of the lock down period. Results from March show an average reduction of 12.17% reduction in NOx levels monitored across the town and is particularly significant in normally busy streets like St Michaels Road. Results for April have been sent to the Lab and we would expect them to show an ever higher reduction given the lockdown was interested in late March.

Electric Charging Points

Work commenced in early March to start the installation of electric vehicle charging points in our car parks, unfortunately was suspended when the government lockdown was introduced, but we hope to be able to resume shortly.

Environmental Health

Covid-19 has caused an increased workload with the team becoming involved in a significant amount of work on business advice and enforcement, infection control and social distancing. Staff have dealt with over 120 enquiries and complaints about possible breaches of legislation. An education and engagement approach has been adopted. Levels of compliance have generally been very good but it has been necessary to take enforcement action in a small number of cases where there have been reported breaches. A total of four fixed penalty notices have been served. There have been three changes in the legislation in two months and further changes are expected in the near future. Local authorities across Northamptonshire have worked together to provide guidance to businesses on social distancing and risk assessment.

Team members are involved in the development of local infection management plans and it is likely that this work will increase in the coming months.

Thanks

In summary, I have been overwhelmed by the ability of both our officers and our contractors to go over and above the call of duty in these past few weeks. I have had many messages of thanks from local residents all of which have passed onto the relevant person or a team. You are a credit to Northampton and we are all grateful for your efforts. Please remember that when we are applauding our thanks each week– we are applauding you too!

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

15th June 2020

Northampton's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

On 20th May, Cabinet approved a multi-agency strategy and action plan that sets out how the Council and its partners will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.

Northampton's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has four strategic priorities:

- Creating effective and collaborative partnerships;
- Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention;
- Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable housing for homeless households; and
- Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive.

Implementation of Northampton's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will continue until it is replaced by a new Strategy for West Northamptonshire.

Protecting Rough Sleepers from COVID-19

On 27th March, Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter was closed, due to the high risk that COVID-19 poses to people who are sleeping in dormitory-style accommodation. On that day, all of the guests and dozens of rough sleepers were moved into two of the town's hotels.

Responding to the Government's call for "Everyone in by the weekend", the Council's Street Services Team of Outreach Workers and Rough Sleeper Navigators moved 71 homeless men and women into the hotels within 72 hours and, by 31st March, the number had 'peaked' at 90.

Everyone who is placed in the hotels has a double room, receives three meals a day, toiletries, fresh clothing, a fortnightly laundry service and access to a joined-up drug and alcohol treatment and support service that helps guests to address their drug and alcohol use.

Most of the rough sleepers who have been accommodated have thrived in the hotels, engaged well with the Street Services Team and made the most of the opportunity to address their drug and alcohol use, improve their health and wellbeing, and access the help and support they need.

By 3rd June, 40 of the people staying in the hotels had been helped to move out of the hotels and into settled accommodation. Half of these have moved into homes that are managed by the Northampton single homelessness charity, NAASH.

Although the Council's original 12 week 'block booking' arrangement with the two hotels comes to an end on 18th June, there is still much to be done and, as at 3rd June, 61 people were still being accommodated in the hotels. The hotels will now continue to be used until the end of June.

It is hoped that, by the end of June, a lot more of the rough sleepers in the hotels will have been moved on successfully into settled housing and that an alternative supply of emergency accommodation can be secured in order to prevent the rough sleepers from returning to the streets when they leave the hotels on 1 July.²⁸

I am very proud of the excellent, multi-agency work that is being done to keep rough sleepers safe and help them engage with services, rebuild their lives and achieve their full potential.

This has only been possible because of the strong and effective partnership relationships between the Council, Northampton Hope Centre, NAASH, Churches Together in Northampton and a wide range of other local services and organisations.

Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy & Housing Enforcement Policy

Since the approval of the Private Sector Housing Civil Penalties Policy (20th April) and the updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (20 May), the two policies have been published on the Council's website and officers are now working to them.

These policies support the Council's work in raising standards in Northampton's private rented sector, encouraging behaviour change and tackling criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.

Multi-Agency Housing Enforcement

The intelligence-led, targeted, multi-agency housing enforcement undertaken in November, together with the work undertaken by the MHCLG-funded Special Operations Unit in January and February, is progressing with a view to prosecution for the more serious offences and civil penalties where the circumstances merit it and allow.

Anecdotally, this high profile housing enforcement activity is starting to have a positive impact on the number of landlord enquiries about HMO Licensing.

Northampton's Housing Enforcement Team and its partners – including the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Trading Standards, Immigration, HMRC, the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority and the Planning and Building Control teams – will continue tackling serious organised crime in a manner that is innovative, effective and can be replicated elsewhere.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Private Sector Housing Team

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Private Sector Housing Team.

Although the opportunity for members of the Team to undertake enforcement inspections has reduced, the demands on the team to support landlords needing advice and guidance on the impacts of coronavirus have increased. There has also been an increase in the number of enquiries and service requests relating to illegal eviction activity in the private rented sector.

The Team has been proactive in sending information (including links to Government information and guidance) to known private sector landlords. It is anticipated that, when the 'lockdown' is relaxed, the number of evictions (both legal and illegal) will increase.

Northampton Partnership Homes

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the borough's residents and, although many of NPH's day to day operations, priorities and pressures have changed as a result of the pandemic, looking after its staff and the Council's tenants and leaseholders has remained NPH's highest priority.

Wherever practicable, NPH staff have been working from home. Back office and support staff who are unable to undertake their normal duties have been redeployed to other roles in order to ensure that there is enough frontline support and all vulnerable residents are contacted.

I am very pleased to report that, during this extremely difficult time, NPH staff have contacted more than 2,000 tenants, delivered hundreds of food parcels, collected essential medicines and made weekly checks on more than 400 residents to ensure that they are coping.

Emergency maintenance and essential compliance, safety works

In order to ensure that safety issues are resolved and major damage to homes is prevented, NPH has reduced its maintenance service to an emergency repairs service. The repairs team have PPE and procedures in place to make sure that social distancing can be maintained.

Requests for non-urgent repairs are being recorded and will be programmed for completion once normal working procedures can resume. This will be a major task, as more than 2,500 non-urgent repairs requests have already been recorded. Non-urgent works outside of the home have already started where it is safe to do so.

Although the Health and Safety Executive has made it clear that it expects full safety compliance – including gas and lift servicing – many tenants have told NPH they do not want anyone to access their homes at this time. NPH has raised this with the town's MPs.

Neighbourhoods and housing services

Reports of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and fly tipping have all increased.

Although housing surgeries have had to be put on hold and some of the enforcement measures normally used are not possible at the moment, NPH is dealing with reported cases of ASB as quickly as possible and it is working closely with the Police to keep the neighbourhoods safe.

In line with Government instructions, most evictions have been put on hold. NPH continues to undertake work on void properties but with social distancing in place. This means that, in many instances, only one person at a time will be working in the property.

All lettings are carried out with social distancing, and tenants will view properties unattended. This complies fully with the new guidance issued by MHCLG on 27th April 2020 requiring social landlords to proceed with essential moves that enable vulnerable people to move home.

New build development works

NPH has worked hard to keep its construction sites running – whilst ensuring safe working and social distancing – and maintain supply chains. It has continued to support the local economy wherever possible.

Work is continuing, as normal, to progress projects and develop proposals for new schemes, including a number of major development opportunities such as Beaumont House (the conversion of an office block into 60 apartments), Belgrave House (the conversion of an office block into 124 apartments) and Riverside House (the conversion of an office block into 60 apartments). All of these schemes have recently been approved by Cabinet.

Looking Forward

NPH has started to develop a COVID-19 “recovery plan” and business transformation plan which will include a staged return to business and a new way of working that includes, for some time, social distancing and increased protection and prevention measures.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing

Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement & Community Safety



Northampton Borough Council

15 June 2020

Councillor Community Fund

Since 1 April 2020, a total of £18,855 has been spent by councillors on supporting the delivery of positive outcomes in their wards. £11,550 of the total has funded organisations that are directly supporting those most vulnerable in our communities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Partnership Support

We have received 47 applications for the partnership grant for funding for 2020-2021. The panel have met and will put forward their recommendations for the projects that will be supported this year.

Northampton Community Resilience Hub

A network of key officers, including; the community safety & engagement team, Northampton Partnership Homes, customer services and redeployed museum staff have been coordinating the requests that have been coming into Northampton's community resilience hub.

More than 6000 volunteers have signed up to support vulnerable residents in Northampton –these volunteers have been and continue to be matched up with the existing community groups (126 that have registered) in the Town. The hub has been working with the volunteers to ensure that support is in place for each resident that has requested help through the central support line. More than 800 vulnerable people in Northampton have requested help and been supported with emergency food deliveries, food collection, shopping, furniture collection, prescription collections, emotional and mental health issues, loneliness and social isolation and financial support.

A leaflet with the contact details for the support helpline has been delivered to every household in the Borough thanks to 26 of our volunteer groups, NBC staff, NSport and the British Red Cross.

Forums

18 May 2020 – IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) marked virtually, a series of speeches and a pre-recorded minute of noise from our LGBTQ community groups and allies.

Youth forum started planning the 'youth app' in partnership with communication and digital teams at NBC, the app will allow young people to see what youth provision there is in the Town, searchable by location.

Events

No outdoor events have been held throughout April and May, and all outdoor events for June have been postponed. This is in line with the Governments lockdown and health guidance.

However, to celebrate VE Day Northampton set up a virtual programme of events on the 8 May working with partners and these included the following:

- performances were broadcasted on the Mayor of Northampton's Facebook page on Friday 8 May, and throughout the Bank Holiday weekend
- All performers gave their time and equipment for free
- Sermon read by Father Oliver Coss - Rector of All Saints' Church
- themed choral hymns performed by the All Saints' Church Choir
- 'In Memoriam' poem written by local poet James McInerney
- Mayor of Northampton addressed the citizens of the Borough
- 'Unmentioned in Despatches' poem read by Deputy Mayor
- Northamptonshire Indian Hindu welfare organisation spoke about community values – 'we are stronger together'
- Northamptonshire Royal Signals Chairman addressed the citizens of Northampton with a VE Day speech
- Playing of the 'Last Post' by former HM Services Bugler
- Playing of 'Battle's O'er' and 'VE 75 Years' by the Northamptonshire Pipe Band
- National Toast to the Heroes of WW2 led by the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire
- 'On the Home Front' 'virtual' mystery tour by Northampton's Looking Glass Theatre
- Town Crier call for peace around the world performed by the Looking Glass Theatre
- The bells of All Saints' Church rang out for peace 75 times
- 'Virtual VE Day 75' Live Jive Dance Zoom Party performed by Step by Step Dance School
- Illumination of The National Lift Tower and sing-along to Vera Lynn's wartime favourite, 'We Will Meet Again' provided by MLE Pyrotechnics Limited

Because of the successful VE Day virtual celebrations, we are looking to deliver other virtual programmes for some events throughout the year.

Culture & Heritage

Abington Park Museum's last day of opening to the public was Sunday 15 March before it temporarily closed. All scheduled exhibitions, events and activities up to the end of August have been cancelled due to uncertainty as to when the Government guidelines will lift restrictions. Any bookings for ticketed events that had been received were refunded. Several weddings and private hires have either been rebooked for later in the year or cancelled and deposits refunded. The cancellation of schools, events and postponing of various income earning hires has negatively impacted on our income targets. A number of museum staff have been redeployed to the Covid teams. Three members of staff are co-ordinating support for referrals receiving details of residents needing support with picking up prescriptions, food delivery, shopping, mental health support and loneliness, then matching these with volunteers/organisations that can provide the help and support. Other staff are involved in the delivering these actions. Other staff are helping manage redeployment of council staff to assist different task

groups and undertaking the administration for the testing of council staff exhibiting symptoms on a countywide basis. This work is positively contributing to the council response to the Covid 19 crisis and helping to provide support and assistance to some of our most vulnerable residents.

A series of social media interactives is currently being planned and staff are planning for how we can safely reopen later this year abiding by the 2m social distancing rules. An exhibition is in development looking at the response of individuals, communities and essential workers and services in Northamptonshire to the Covid 19 pandemic. Some of this material will enter the museum collections to help document this highly significant moment in time.

Museum Expansion Project

A Practical Completion certificate was issued to the main contractor on 9th April and the council took back possession of the building. A number of snagging items remain outstanding and work was paused due to the Covid-19 lock down. During May and June there has been a slow resumption of work and a skeleton staff are managing access for Wildgoose contractors.

A programme for exhibition installation under Covid 19 safe working practices has been developed. Work will begin on install once all Wildgoose contractors have left site, with a provisional start date of end of June. Work is expected to be completed in early December, though this is subject to revision once the impact of new working practices is better understood. A revised opening date will be confirmed on this basis.

Customer Services

Customer Services has managed to deliver an interrupted service whilst balancing Covid19.

This was achieved by introducing robust contingencies to ensure that all services were available. We balanced the business need, including the increase of contacts due to introduction of chargeable green waste and staff needs enabling us to make reasonable adjustments to protecting staff whilst continuing to deliver our service.

We have achieved this through working closely with our Partners, LGSS and NPH to agree and continue to review the new working processes. We are meeting regularly to plan the recovery stages to ensure that we are planning to be available to support the most vulnerable during the recovery period.

In addition, we are working closely with the Community Cell and are calling approximately 150 residents per week to completing welfare checks. These calls will continue through the recovery stages enabling us to identify issues early and working with Partners to put measures in place preventing increased vulnerabilities.

We are supporting a local community who are asking for donations of pillowcases and fabric by having a collection point in the OSS. The local community are then making Laundry bags for NHS and Care Homes staff to transport their uniforms.

We continue to work closely with our existing Partners to help support them through the recovery process.

We are speaking with NDAS (Northampton Domestic Abuse Service) to discuss a presence in the One Stop Shop (OSS) for people experiencing Domestic Violence providing a safe place to receive support. NDAS are keen to start a drop-in clinic in the

OSS and when it is appropriate this service will be operating three times a week from the One Stop Shop.

Community Safety

Although within the last 12 months we have seen an overall increase in crime of 0.4%, the all crime rate for the Community Safety Partnership is moving towards the average for our Most Similar Group, which reflects a stronger performance than our comparator partnerships in a time of rising crime levels.

Although incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded by Northamptonshire Police fell by 18.8% during the year. The reduction was seen in the majority of the wards across the town. However, it is worth noting that Police are recording breaches of the COVID regulations as anti-social behaviour offences and we should expect to see a significant increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports in the first quarter of 2020/21. A secondary measure for anti-social behaviour is criminal damage: figures for the Partnership decreased by 2.1% compared with 2018/19.

We have a coordinated response to the Covid-19 breaches, where ASB is highlighted and enforcement action required, our ASB Team and environmental health are working closely with the Police and Northampton Partnership Homes.

We continue to work with Free2Talk on the Home Office Trusted relationships project, who have increased the areas they are covering in the Town, with additional funding from the Home Office for the next 12 months. We are also supporting with the opening of several youth spaces in the Town. An information sheet detailing which youth services continue to be provided has been produced and shared amongst frontline officers to ensure our young people continue to access services and are supported in the community.

Kings Heath, Briar Hill, St Crispins/Upton all had their first local multi-agency neighbourhood meetings at the end of March. All went well, issues being identified and then action plans to be developed.

Councillor Anna King
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration & Enterprise



Northampton Borough Council

Monday 15th June 2020

ECONOMY AND ASSETS

Economic Growth and Regeneration

The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy

The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy and associated action plan was approved at Cabinet on 20th May 2020. The Northampton Economic Growth Strategy is a key document for the Council that will shape the future of Northampton's economy, enable the safeguarding and creation of local jobs and stimulate wealth creation for residents. It will help the Council to improve conditions that will assist local business to thrive such as enabling job creation and the growth of the town as well as to unlock potential opportunities on offer from Central Government, linked to wider growth opportunities across the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Arc.

Future High Street Fund

The Northampton Forward Board has continued to meet on Zoom throughout lockdown. Outline design proposals, budget cost plans and development appraisals for the proposed schemes for inclusion in the FHSF business are complete. The deadline for submission of the final FHSF business case is the 5th June. Final details are being worked up for submission on the 2nd June. The decision on the final allocation of funding will be made by the MHCLG in the summer.

Upton Country Park

The phase two works to are now complete with the site handed back to the Council from the contractor. The phase two of the Country Park gives enhanced accessibility to the natural environment of more than 127 hectares of open space, stretching from Upton Mill Farm through to the village of Kislingbury. The project included the construction of 2.4km of new paths and cycle ways, with new woodland and wetland, served by a viewing platform.

Towns Fund

Northampton is one of the 101 towns and cities invited to develop proposals for a Town Deal, as part of the Government's £3.6 billion Towns Fund. As part of this, Northampton will have to develop a Town Investment Plan which should focus on driving economic and productivity growth through investment in connectivity, land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure. The Town Investment Plan for Northampton will be developed in the summer ready for submission later in the year.

Weston Favell Health and Wellbeing Hub We have secured funding through One Public Estate (OPE) to support the development of the Weston Favell Health and Wellbeing Hub. This project will bring forward 3.8 hectares of under-utilised public sector buildings and land at Weston Favell District Shopping Centre through the delivery of a new Health and Wellbeing Hub. The services at the hub would replace the current tired facilities in the local area, giving customers modern and user centred services while also allowing for more cost-efficient delivery. A consultant team (Continuum Sport and Leisure in partnership with Hawkins Brown Architects) have been appointed to develop a feasibility study and business plan for the project.

COVID-19

In response to the C-19 pandemic, the Government made several funding streams available to support the business community. Initially, NBC received £37m to issue to local businesses as part of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund. These grants were to support businesses in the sectors that were struggling the most and experiencing significant hardship. The EG&R worked closely with Finance to ensure the timely and safe delivery of these funds. Up to the End of May over £31m of grants have been issued to local businesses. In May, the Government announced a top-up to the existing grant scheme – the Local Authority Discretionary Fund. This fund was for LA's to issue to small businesses who didn't qualify for the original schemes, primarily and predominantly focusing on those businesses with high fixed-property costs. NBC has £1.7m as part of this fund. Payments as part of the Discretionary Fund will start to be made in early June.

Vulcan Works Cultural Hub

Work is still progressing well on site however at a reduced capacity due to issues around COVID-19. Developments continue seeing masonry works continuing on Guildhall Road and underpinning progressing. Roof replacements completed with the exception of the last bay on which the works have now commenced in Fetter Street. Final fix electrical is underway and partitioning in progress to upper floors in Angel Street. These have yet to be determined. Tender documents for an operator of the centre are being developed which will be issued in the coming weeks.

Marefair Heritage Gateway

Design work on a proposed new development has been completed and development appraisals are underway. If viable the scheme will be presented to members/partners/stakeholders and a cabinet report prepared determining the way forward.

24 Guildhall Rd (Guildhall Rd Block) A feasibility study to assess the options on the future uses of the upper floors has begun. As part of this work consultation will take place with key stakeholders including but not limited to NN Contemporary, Royal and Derrigate and University of Northampton

Corporate Assets

In line with review of asset holdings, Rectory Farmhouse was approved for sale in February. The sale is by way of auction, the assets team continue to progress this but due to COVID19 progress has slowed as a result of restrictions on viewings and the

impact on the commercial sales market generally. The sale will progress as soon as things improve and become more certain.

In March, Cabinet approved the sale of fifteen community shops, initially being offered to the tenants of those shops but with restrictions on use to safeguard these community facilities. These sales will support the realignment and reduction of the portfolio thus ensuring the Council only retains assets that contribute to our Corporate Plan and our commitment to energy reduction. The capital receipts will be used to fund capital projects and reduce the reliance on borrowing.

In May, Cabinet approved the transfer of a number of community assets to Billing, Duston, East Hunsbury, Upton and Wootton Parish Councils. The conveyance will ensure there are adequate restrictions placed on the land to remain for community use, but the Parishes will be best placed to manage the facilities for the community. We are in discussions with the Parish Councils over these and working collaboratively to progress this through to completion.

As reported by finance in the late May Cabinet, COVID 19 will impact the Council's commercial property income, the estates team are working with tenants to mitigate the loss of income but also to try to ensure a recovery model can be agreed by both parties wherever possible. Tenants are being signposted to the information on funding and encouraged to obtain all the support they can. It is too early to know the full effect of the lockdown but further updates will be provided to Council as this becomes clearer.

Property Maintenance

Works on the Street light replacement scheme has commenced on the 24th February, with work now approximately 50% complete. In spite of challenges faced by Covid 19 this project remains on course to complete in the summer.

The extension of Rectory Farm Community Centre is still progressing. Due to Covid 19 there has been a delay and this work is now intended to be completed in June.

Watercourse surveys carried out – (first time since 2014 as not in Veolia/Enterprise contracts) prices will be obtained and essential works carried out on a phased approach)

Structural surveys of all of the monuments across the Borough have now been carried out

Finally I would like to congratulate all the staff who have managed to keep all of this work on track in unprecedented circumstances, and at the same time shoulder additional duties related to the Covid emergency. I am very proud to work with you.

Cllr Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise

Finance

The Finance Teams are finalising the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019-20, whilst still working with the Auditors on the Accounts for 2018-19.

The final end of year budget position for 2019-20 will be considered at Cabinet on 10 June 2016, this continues to project a slight overspend.

Whilst the Finance Team will not be building a budget for NBC for 2021-22 they will be part of the new West Northants Council resource to construct the first budget for the new council, in respect of the elements that will be moving across from this council.

As per the Cabinet Report, 27 May 2020 on Covid Finance impacts, we continue as a Cabinet and in conjunction with the Corporate Management Board to regularly review the costs incurred, income lost and grant funding available. We await further news on whether there might be further tranches of funding forthcoming for specific areas, but at this time understand there could be an overspend risk to the Council of between £2M and £3M, through the year. July Cabinet will receive a further update and proposals that might be considered if cost savings must be made.

Revenues & Benefits

This service area is perhaps one of the most affected within my portfolio in respect of working to support the Covid19 solutions.

Ordinarily I would report on collection rates and benefits performance, whilst this data continues to be captured, the reporting focus has been on some key tasks and areas.

BEIS Business Grants Scheme One – NBC was initially provided with £37M, which after review is likely to be around £35M in terms of need for Scheme One, with £1.7M of the £37M now designated as being for BEIS Scheme Two – Discretionary Fund.

At the time of writing I am pleased to advise that our teams have distributed in excess of 2,500 grants to business in our Borough, with a value close to £32M. This has been a tremendous exercise, from a standing start. As Portfolio Holder I have taken a personal interest, with the Leader and received daily updates on progress and sought to motivate and support the teams undertaking the work. We continue to seek out the remaining businesses that may qualify for this grant.

We launched our second scheme on 1st June 2020 and anticipate making the first payments from 8 June 2020. Although this scheme will just be for £1.7M it will provide much needed support to another group of businesses.

This is addition to the £34M of Business Rates that will not be paid across the Small Business, Retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Nurseries sectors. Cancelling and adjusting all of these bills has consumed more of this service resource.

Furthermore for those that were in receipt of Council Tax Reduction Scheme discounts, their bills have also had to be readjusted with a Government Funded reduction of £150 per bill. This has seen in excess of 8,500 bills adjusted.

In respect of collection rates and debt management, the Management Board and service have complied with Government Guidance and sought to actively support those that cannot pay or are having difficulty paying, through moving payments schedules from 10 instalments to 12, signposting to benefits and use of the hardship fund in extreme cases.

We will recommence soft reminders in July to those that should be paying, but may have forgotten to.

Facilities Management

I would ordinarily report on the performance and commercial activities of the Facilities Team, however like many businesses, our income has been lost. However the teams have been working hard to support all services with deep cleaning, installed new security doors in the Guildhall, protective screens in the One Stop Shop, maintaining the full post room service, where scanning documents for electronic use is even more critical than normal.

Wider CFO Team

Whilst not all of the CFO areas fall under my Portfolio directly I have close working and discussions with CFO on the wider group and their activities and am very pleased at how these enabling services have performed, whether that is aching hundreds of new H&S DSE assessments for all our staff working from home and those supporting frontline services. Our IT functions both in house and from our LGSS partner have delivered innovative solutions, one of which enabled us to mobilise so many staff so swiftly, included a pre-emptive change/upgrade that allowed Wyse Terminals and screens to be moved from the office to homes, which was not previously thought possible and has saved us thousands in additional IT equipment.

Other teams include our HR function who continue to pay our staff (always reassuring), deliver new data and analysis at speed on staff availability, impact of Covid on sickness, isolations etc. With several of the wider team also playing an active role in the response itself through the various Groups and Cells.

I have been asked by the CFO to pass on his and his teams appreciation to Councillor Colleagues who have shown great restraint this past couple of months, with few enquiries and those that have been made have directly related to assisting with grants and other resolution of other issues. This has allowed this whole group and services to maintain a very focused approach to getting the work done.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance

Appendices: 1



COUNCIL

15th June 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Chief Executive

Report Title	Northampton Borough Council's Pay Policy Statement 2020/21
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1. Purpose

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires every local authority to publish a Pay Policy Statement annually. This report details the information which must be included in this statement and provides a Pay Policy Statement for approval for the year 2020/21.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2020/21 attached at Appendix 1.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a requirement for every local authority, to prepare and publish an annual Pay Policy Statement; which clearly sets out the authority's own policies on how much it pays its staff, particularly its senior staff (or 'Chief Officers') and its lowest-paid employees.

3.2 This requirement was introduced to:

- a) increase the accountability, transparency and fairness of setting local pay;
- b) give local people access to information to allow them to determine whether pay is appropriate; and

- c) ensure that the pay of senior staff is fair in the context of the pay of the rest of the workforce.
 - d) To ensure that there is value for money for local taxpayers.
- 3.3 Specifically, the Localism Act 2011 requires the Pay Policy Statement to include the Council's policies for the financial year in relation to:
- a) The remuneration of Chief Officers (including salary, bonuses, charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind)
 - b) The remuneration of the Council's lowest-paid employees
 - c) The relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees who are not Chief Officers
 - d) Remuneration for newly appointed Chief Officers
 - e) Increases and additions to remuneration for each Chief Officer
 - f) The use of performance related pay for Chief Officers
 - g) The use of bonuses (if applicable) for Chief Officers
 - h) The approach to the payment of Chief Officers on their ceasing to hold office under or be employed by the authority
 - i) The publication of and access to information relating to the remuneration of Chief Officers.
- 3.4 The Council is required to have regard to any guidance issued or approved by the Secretary of State when preparing and approving its Pay Policy Statement. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a guidance document under the Localism Act 2011 in February 2012 entitled "*Openness and accountability in local pay*". DCLG also issued supplementary Guidance in February 2013.
- 3.5 Pay Policy Statements must be prepared and approved for each financial year.
- 3.6 Once approved, the Pay Policy Statement must be published in such a manner as the Council thinks fit, which must include publication on the Council's website.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

There have been no changes to existing pay policies although a number are under review.

4.2 Resources and Risk

The Pay Policy Statement must be prepared for the financial year 2020/21, there may be no need for the Borough Council to publish a further Pay Policy document, this being a matter for the new Unitary Authority which will have its own staffing structures and pay. Once the proposed Pay Policy is in place it will provide the public with a clear rationale to explain the Council's approach to pay.

4.3 Legal

The main legal implications are set out in the body of the report. The requirements of the Localism Act 2011 to produce and publish the Pay Policy Statement supplement all the existing duties and responsibilities of the Council as an employer, particularly its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to avoid discrimination and provide equal pay. Since the Pay Policy Statement contains policies concerned with remuneration rather than information relating to individuals, the provisions of the Data Protection Act are not engaged and there are therefore not any grounds upon which to exclude the public when Members are considering the Pay Policy Statement.

Councils are required, under the Localism Act 2011 to comply with the terms of the Pay Policy document, failing which any payments made to staff may be unlawful.

4.4 Other Implications

The Pay Policy Statement will assist the Council to monitor remuneration across the service and provide a fair system of remuneration, which avoids discrimination.

4.5 Equality

There is no direct impact on the equality context arising from this document as it is a statement of existing policy, which itself is equality compliant.

5. Background Papers

None specifically

George Candler
Chief Executive



Pay Policy Statement 2020/21

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northampton Borough Council recognises that, in the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to secure and retain high quality employees dedicated to service of the public, but at the same time needs to avoid being unnecessarily generous or excessive.
- 1.2 It is important that local authorities are able to determine their own pay structures in order to address local priorities, compete in the local market and deliver value for money for local taxpayers.
- 1.3 In particular, it is recognised that senior management roles in local government are complex and diverse functions in a highly politicised environment where often national and local pressures conflict. The Council's ability to continue to attract and retain high calibre managers capable of delivering this complex agenda, particularly during times of financial challenge, is crucial if the Council is to retain its current high performance levels.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to ensuring that it is open and transparent about its pay policies and how pay decisions are made. This Pay Policy Statement fulfils the Council's statutory requirements under the Localism Act 2011 and was agreed by Full Council on [15th June 2020].
- 1.5 The Council publishes information on all senior employees earning £50,000 or above in the open data pages of the Council's website.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Pay Policy Statement applies to all employees covered by the NBC local pay bargaining arrangements, which were introduced on the 1 April 2015.

It sets out the Council's policies on:

- a) The remuneration of Chief Officers
- b) The remuneration of the Council's lowest paid employees

- c) The relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees who are not Chief Officers
- d) Remuneration for newly appointed Chief Officers
- e) Increases and additions to remuneration for each Chief Officer
- f) The use of performance related pay for Chief Officers
- g) The use of bonuses (if applicable) for Chief Officers

2.2 Remuneration in this context is defined widely and includes not just salary, but other elements of remuneration including expenses, bonuses, performance related pay and other contractual arrangements that include possible future severance payments.

2.3 For the purposes of the Pay Policy Statement, the term Chief Officer refers to the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Heads of Service (using the Director title).

3. Basic Pay Determination

3.1 The pay grade and terms and conditions that are applied to each post are determined through the process of job evaluation. Both Hay and National Joint Council (NJC) schemes are used. The key principles underlying the application of job evaluation in the Borough Council are:

- Consistency of application to ensure fairness;
- Application by appropriately trained and experienced employees;
- Openness and transparency to ensure accessibility for employees and their representatives;
- Incorporation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

3.2 The pay grade of the workforce (all staff other than Chief Officers) will be in accordance with pay grades 1-11 on locally agreed pay structures, also established on 1 April 2015.

3.3 Starting salary for all appointments (new recruits, employees who transfer within the organisation and promoted employees) is the first point of the new grade. In exceptional circumstances (which must be supported with a business case), a starting salary above the minimum will be approved. This occurs in cases where it is necessary to meet an existing salary and the candidate can demonstrate a level of skill and experience that is comparable to existing employees who have progressed through the grade.

4. Chief Officer Pay (Senior Management Team)

4.1 The pay grade of posts on Hay terms and conditions, notably the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Heads of Service (using the Director title) posts will be in accordance with Senior Manager pay grades on the locally agreed pay structures which were established on 1 April 2015.

Senior Management Pay Grades	
Grade	Salary range (£)
SMG1	49,142-56,968
SMG2	58,678 -68,023
SMG3	70,064 – 76,487
SMG4	83,662 – 91,418

Director Pay Grade – Not currently in use	
Grade	Salary Range (£)
CDG	102,888-124,061

Chief Executive Grade	
Grade	Salary (£)
CEX	149,726

4.2 Any increase to the senior pay group pay scale is locally negotiated on an annual basis. This covers posts in the top three tiers of the Council; that is, the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Heads of Service (using the Director title).

4.3 There are presently no other additional elements of remuneration in respect of overtime, flexi-leave, bank holiday working, standby payments for Chief Officers. Any duties undertaken by Chief Officers outside of their contractual hours are normally without additional payment. The Council may, in very exceptional circumstances, agree to additional payments where the need is clearly demonstrated, or it could decide to allow Chief Officers to accumulate Toil/Flexi-hours.

4.4 Bonuses are not paid to Chief Officers.

5. Decisions on Remuneration

5.1 The Appointments and Appeals Committee comprises six members of the Council (of whom at least two are Cabinet members). In relation to appointments, the Appointments and Appeals Committee has the delegated authority to:

- (i) Recommend to the Council the appointment of the Chief Executive.
- (ii) To make appointments of other Chief Officers.
- (iii) To undertake all associated activities including agreeing job descriptions, person specifications, the interview process generally.

5.2 Decisions on remuneration are made as follows:

- a) Chief Executive Officer local pay level approved by Full Council;
- b) Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Head of Service – (using the director title) local pay level approved by Appointments and Appeals Committee;
- c) Pay structure for all other posts approved by General Purposes Committee;
- d) Performance Progression Scheme in accordance with the locally agreed scheme, as approved by officers under existing delegated powers;
- e) Notwithstanding “a” to “d” above, any salary packages of £100,000 or more requires Full Council approval. (A salary package includes salary, any bonuses, fees or allowances routinely payable to the appointee and any benefits in kind to which the officer would be entitled as a result of their employment); and
- f) Notwithstanding “a” to “d” above or any aspect of this Statement, any severance package of £100,000 or more requires Full Council approval. The components of a severance package may include salary paid in lieu, redundancy compensation, pension entitlements (excluding the capital value of any pension entitlement), holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid).

5.3 **Pay award**

Since 1 April 2015, cost of living increases in relation to all employees are determined locally. The General Purposes Committee ratifies the level of increase, if any, to be applied to the published pay rates, by reference to the Council’s performance against measurable targets and overall affordability. The pay rates will be updated as soon as negotiations are complete and Committee ratification has been given each year.

5.4 **Individual salary level**

Progression through development points staff below Head of Service Level.

The Performance Progression Policy dated 1 April 2020 details how individuals might progress through the development points and there is no automatic progression. Personal development in role may be recognised by the award of discretionary consolidated pay movements each year, in accordance with locally agreed step values, through the grades. Awards may be considered only on completion of Personal Development Plan milestones and where contribution and competence have been suitably evidenced and assessed via the performance management scheme (appraisal).

Progression related to Performance for Chief Officers

Individuals are rated on their appraisal outcome. Performance in role may then be recognised by the pay awards, which are at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive.

5.5 **Additional Fees**

Additional fees apply to the role of the Returning Officer. This is a statutory role incurring personal responsibility and accountability separate from the Returning Officer’s normal employment contract. The Returning Officer is paid a separate allowance for each election for

which he/she is responsible. The local scale of fees went to General Purposes Committee on 18 March 2019 where it was approved. The scale of fees was accepted and that it would increase each year in line with annual pay award. The national election fees are prescribed by statutory instrument and funded by government.

5.6 Market Supplements

Paying a Market Supplement may be a necessity and the current Market Supplement Policy (under review) outlines the guidance for the application of a market supplement, including the need to undertake a market review on an annual basis. Any payments need to comply with the approved market supplement policy extant at the time.

6. Pay Equity and the Pay Multiple

6.1 A pay multiple is the ratio of the pay of an organisation's top earner to that of the mean/median earner.

6.2 The Council's current ratio in this respect is the Chief Executive (top earner) earns 4.6 times more than the Council's median earner (£15.26 per hour). When measured against the mean salary (£16.28 per hour), the ratio is 4.31.

6.3 The Council does not currently have a policy of maintaining or reaching a specific pay multiple target. The Council commits to calculating the pay ratio on an annual basis to monitor trends and to ensure that this pay multiple does not widen.

6.4 The Council monitors the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of its lowest paid employees. The Council defines its 'lowest' paid employees as employees paid on the first spinal column point (scp 11) of the pay spine. This is the lowest rate of pay applied to Council employees, currently £18,443 per annum. The Council has applied the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage, which means that the lowest paid employee is on the equivalent of £18,082 a year for the full-time role. The Council has separate rates for Apprentices that are linked to the Living Wage.

7. Termination of employment and Severance Packages

7.1 On ceasing to be employed by the Council, employees will be paid contractual payments due under their contract of employment.

7.2 The Council's Redundancy Policy (implemented in January 2012, revised in January 2015 and reviewed in February 2016, (currently under review) details the conditions under which redundancy payments can be made. The Council calculates redundancy payments based on an individual's actual pay, length of continuous service and age.

7.3 Severance payments are made in accordance with the Council's Redundancy Policy and relevant employment legislation.

- 7.4 Employees with more than two years' service, if made redundant, will be entitled to redundancy pay in line with local government guidelines, the Council's Redundancy Policy (under review) and statutory provisions. Redundant employees will receive two elements of their final pay:
- Normal pay (including pay in lieu of any outstanding leave) up to the agreed leaving date;
 - A redundancy payment (where entitled) calculated in accordance with the statutory provisions and the Council's Redundancy Policy (under review).

In exceptional circumstances, the Council reserves the right to make a payment in lieu of notice. This will only be considered if it is in the best interests of the Council, or on compassionate grounds, and will require authorisation by the Chief Executive or in his absence, the section 151 Officer.

Under the Council's current Redundancy Policy, a week's pay will be calculated on the basis of contractual pay.

- 7.5 Employees in the pension scheme and who are over age 55 are entitled to immediate onset of pension benefits based on actual reckonable service if they:
- Are over 55 at the termination date;
 - Have three or more months membership in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) or with transferred service

- 7.6 An employee will lose their entitlement to redundancy pay if they take up a post with another body covered by the Redundancy Payments (Local Government)(Modification)(Amendment) Orders within four weeks(31 days) of the date of the redundancy and the offer of the new job has been made before the end of the original contract.

7.7 **Re-engagement of former employees**

Any former NBC Council employee, who is in receipt of an early retirement pension on the grounds of voluntary or compulsory redundancy, should not normally be re-employed by the Council either on the basis of a contract of employment or a contract for services with the Council. If there is any doubt about the continuing need for an employee's services then early retirement should not be agreed.

However, it is recognised that there are some, very limited, circumstances when reemployment would be in the interests of the Council. In these cases, a report should be submitted to the Chief Executive or his or her nominated senior management representative, seeking approval to re-employ.

Employees who take advantage of the flexible retirement options, should not be re-employed on the same hours, in the role that they have retired from.

7.8 **Use of consultants, contractors and temporary staff**

The Council is acutely aware of its obligation to secure value for money in the employment of its employees and those who carry out work on its behalf. Ordinarily employees will be employed directly by the Council but there may be occasions when consultants and contractors and temporary staff may be required to be employed for a period of time for their specialist expertise or to temporarily cover vacant posts. IR35 regulations will be taken into consideration when recruiting to these requirements.

8.0 Discretionary Payments

The policy for the award of any discretionary payments is the same for all staff regardless of their pay level. The following arrangements apply:

Redundancy payments, under the Council's current Redundancy Policy (under review) are calculated using actual pay instead of the statutory maximum pay when calculating redundancy payments.

Any discretionary payments arising through the termination of the employment contract will be made using delegated powers and will be based on a full written risk assessment and legal advice.

9.0 Dying to Work

Northampton Borough Council together with several other organisations has signed up to the Dying to Work Charter for the protection of its staff during the time of terminal illness. This charter aims to show compassion and support to terminally ill staff. As part to the Charter pledge, NBC will not use disciplinary action to terminate an employee's contract of employment for being too unwell to work. Instead the Charter empowers the HR manager to look at various options tailored to each circumstance such as:

- Extension of half pay using the CEO's discretion as per the absence policy
- ill-health retirement.

The Council recognises that it is important during personally traumatic times that NBC values its employees in this way and that the employees of the council understand that this support is in place for them should they be affected personally by a terminal illness issue.

10.0 Review

This Pay Policy Statement will be reviewed annually and recommended to Full Council for approval. The statement for 2020/2021 will be submitted to Full Council for approval on 15th June 2020.

The Council may by resolution of the Full Council, amend this Pay Policy Statement during the course of the year to which it relates.

