

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 20 July 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, 20 JULY 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 15 June 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 G Eales to make a statement on “A Recovery Plan for Northampton – Clean, Safe and Green”

9. MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

10. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE PLACES

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor Smith to propose and Councillor Stone to second:

“Predictions are there is going to be a spike in evictions this Autumn following the Covid-19 crisis moratorium on evictions and the movement of people. Our social lettings agency has an ever more important role to mitigate against this happening.

We call on the Council to invest to save by renting or buying up houses to let in the private sector where tenants or landlords are defaulting.”

ii) Councillor Russell to propose and Councillor Ashraf to second:

“Since lockdown began on 26 March, the borough of Northampton has been overwhelmed with illegal dumping and fly tipping, filling our streets and any available vacant area with evil smelling and unsightly rubbish. Our residents pay their ever-increasing council tax and find themselves facing the most appalling situations.

We call on the Council to set up a multi-agency team to track down perpetrators and ensure the appropriate action is taken:

- against criminal and illegal operators who knowingly rob their customers by charging for the removal of rubbish, which is later dumped in our streets;
- against landlords who dump household waste on pavements;
- against and being seen to impose hefty fines on social groups and partygoers who leave piles of used food containers and bottles on our parks;
- to actively support tenants and residents who want to use the recycling depots but for whatever reason are unable to, and;
- to work with the University to offer a collection service to student landlords.”

iii) Councillor King to propose and Councillor Nunn to second:

“This Council recognises the importance of Northampton’s arts and cultural sector as the ‘soul’ of Northampton and will work with our Conservative MPs and central government to access Northampton’s portion of the record-breaking national support package, the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture. This will not only help to secure local jobs, but also mean that our iconic venues can weather the storm created by coronavirus and come back stronger, and continue to be there for local residents and future generations to enjoy. This council will work tirelessly to ensure that this sector emerges from this crisis by continuing to invest in the work of our Heritage, Culture and Communities team in order to provide the support required.”

iv) Councillor Larratt to propose and Councillor Aziz to second:

“This Council notes the decision of the Planning Committee not to object in principle to the County Councils application to develop the North West Relief Road. (N/2019/0840).

It has been the policy of this Council to support the development and delivery of the Northern Orbital Road as a matter of urgency.

This Council notes the comments of the Planning Committee with regard to the provision

of the Northern Orbital Road.

This Council confirms its position requiring that the Northern Orbital Road be developed and delivered as a matter of urgency to support the North West Relief Road, and that this be communicated to NCC.”

12. 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

- 1.1 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.

(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.

(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

Fax 01604 837057

Mail Democratic Services
Northampton Borough Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton NN1 1DE

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 15 June 2020 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

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

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held 9 March 2020 and the meeting of Annual Council held on 21 May 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cali, Davenport and Walker.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor referred to the recent meeting of Annual Council and Mayor making that had taken place remotely over Zoom and that there were a number of past Mayors who were serving on the Council. He had undertaken 48 engagements last year as Deputy Mayor and his first event as Mayor of Northampton for 2020/2021 had been Oak Apple Day. The Mayor confirmed that he was looking forward to future events and the forthcoming flag raising for Arms Forces Day.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that six 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 confirmed that he was aware of an issue with trees in Southfields and remote meetings had taken place. He had also met with residents on site and the case was

under review. Councillor Hallam confirmed that the Tree Policy had been reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor King confirmed that remote meetings with various Groups and the Association of Residents' Associations had resumed recently.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor King confirmed that a full response had been provided and the Police had also been involved regarding the installation of CCTV cameras at Thorpelands.

In answer to a supplementary question relating to question 5, Councillor Hallam advised that feedback is important and there would be learning from the trial.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 6, Councillor Hallam confirmed that he would provide an update on progress regarding the Billing Road cemetery.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Nunn submitted his report as Leader of the Council and highlighted the salient points. He commented that he was delighted that staff had gone over and above in all activities during the Covid19 pandemic. He conveyed his thanks to staff. Councillor Stone echoed the thanks of the Leader to staff. In response to a question regarding Councillors being involved in the question and answer session with Parish Councils regarding the Town Council; the Leader confirmed that this session had been organised and hosted by National Association of Local Councils (NALC). In answer to a question of whether Covid19 had impacted on Northampton Forward spend, the Leader advised that he was not aware of any negative impact but a board meeting was scheduled shortly. In answer to a question regarding the re-implementation of on-street parking charges, the Leader confirmed that he had not been involved in discussions regarding on street parking charges but careful consideration had been given regarding re-implementing car park charges.

Councillor Larratt submitted his report as Deputy-Leader of the Council and highlighted the salient points. He highlighted the work that Democratic Services and Legal Services had undertaken regarding training on remote meetings and hosting remote meetings. In response to a query regarding a business deal with the Cobblers, Councillor Larratt confirmed that there was no agreement and that it had been made clear that any development would only happen when the stadium stand was completed. The Leader advised that at no point has an acceptable agreement been concluded, this Council has a clear process and no deal would be taken until it is ready to be taken. Councillor Larratt added that the Football Supporters Trust would be updated when there was something to say. In answer to a question about the importance of improved entrances to the town, Councillor Larratt confirmed that East West Rail was mindful of the situation and drafts were included with the Local Plan. He added that there is shortly going to be a final consultation on the Local Plan. In response to a query regarding the inclusion of water courseways in the Plan, the

Deputy Leader advised that Northamptonshire County Council had published its plan and it was publicly available on line. NBC's reports fall out of those reports. A consultant had been engaged and provided updated drawings that are currently being looked at by Officers. The report would be published in due course.

Councillor Eldred submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Finance and highlighted the salient points. He thanked the Finance Team for its hard work in reducing the budget overspend to £283,000. He confirmed that some businesses might not have survived without the grants provided by the Council during the Covid19 pandemic. In response to a question regarding the setting up of a Cross Party Working Group to look at finances of the Council; Councillor Eldred confirmed that the Council already has the Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Eldred advised that he has been asked to attend the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide details of expenditure in relation to Covid19. The Finance Team is working hard looking at potential funding streams. In answer to a question regarding the support provided to residents over the next 3-6 months, Councillor Eldred confirmed that there was the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Hardship Fund. In addition, the repayment scheme had been extended to 24 months. Residents are also referred to partner organisation such as CAB, Community Law and the Authority also has its own advisors . There has not been a drop in the collection of Council Tax but if this does happen, schemes etc. can be investigated.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his report as Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and highlighted the salient points. He confirmed that a new Homeless Strategy was in place. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic 61 rough sleepers were now residing in hotels, 42 have been moved into settled and supported accommodation. It had been a successful exercise.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Birch made a statement on lessons learnt so far on the Covid-19 crisis. She commented that the arrival of Covid-19 has made everyone face unprecedented pressures, and changes to every aspect of everyone's lives and families. This generation has never had to face the challenges of an emergency such as this. Working patterns, family routines, social and cultural activities have all been curtailed or greatly altered. It is unimaginable that things can go back to normal in the coming months or years when everyone is overshadowed by a virus which took fewer than 100 days to shut the world down. Councillor Birch went on to state what she felt had been learnt, she commented that communities, neighbours and friends had rallied round and set up support groups, neighbours were contacted and the elderly and vulnerable were identified and offered help. This was replicated at a higher level by the Community Resilience Hub. Over 600 volunteers in the town have come forward and local organisations have played their part, adapting their work to cater for the increased demands on their services. Councillor Birch highlighted that the value of key workers, the health professionals, care workers, teachers, police, ambulance drivers, transport staff, environmental teams, postal workers, delivery drivers, supermarket staff had been learnt. She commented that often, they are undervalued, poorly paid, working on zero hours contracts, with no job security. Councillor Birch commented that this must be changed. Councillor Birch also advised that it had been

learnt that an overly centralised response is not what people want to hear. There is a need for local decisions made at local level. Local Councils working in partnership with local organisations know their communities best. She emphasised that what is wanted is messaging by trusted and familiar community leaders to cut through the confused and ambiguous national broadcasts. There needs to be agile and for there to be swift responses to local needs and information directing people to local services such as testing and tracking facilities. She added the vital role played by digital connectivity; the need for reliable broadband, IT equipment available for home workers; laptops for home schooling was learnt. With the closure of offices, virtual meetings such as this, are vital to maintain good governance and ensure access, engagement and accountability with decision makers. There had been effects of 10 years of austerity on families and council services. Local Government funding has reduced year on year. Many services cut to the bone, with no resilience to fight back in an emergency. Council posts cut or unfilled, the non-essential supports reduced. Emergency supplies run down, local knowledge lost or out of date. Families with precarious finances, debts, insecure jobs and housing. Delays in welfare pay outs, real poverty, hunger, poor physical and mental health. Councillor Birch added that it had been learnt that this pandemic has highlighted inequalities and with Government funding emergency accommodation for the homeless could be found, with Government funding businesses could be helped, Council Tax to the most vulnerable could be subsidised, food boxes could be distributed, staff could be furloughed to preserve jobs and Government financed sick pay for those experiencing Covid -19. As a consequence of the hopefully temporary collapse of the global economy, our environment is cleaner and fresher. People are walking and cycling, discovering and enjoying our wonderful parks and open spaces. People now notice and appreciate wildlife and nature and can manage without using cars as much. This is an opportunity to expand and invest in the green economy, to develop public transport, cycle lanes and pathways; NCC has a grant of £351,000 to do this. It has been recognised how important schools, teachers and education is, along with youth activities are to children and young people. Six months out of school for the majority of children will result in a huge educational deficit. Some children are well supported with their home learning by teachers, parents and carers. Some will not have IT equipment to work with. Some will have to share a laptop with other members of the family or try to work from a phone. For some children it will take many months of catching up to return to the same levels and learning patterns. For some this will never happen and their life chances will be limited due to lack of qualifications and a good standard of education. For some young people, school is a place of safety, away from scenes of domestic abuse, substance abuse and violence in their homes. The hidden harm, depression and anxiety will become apparent only when schools are fully open. The demands on safeguarding and child mental health provision will overwhelm an already stretched service. Young people will need support with jobs and skills training to prevent them becoming the 'pandemic generation'. With the prospect of an economic recession and subsequent depression it is gloomy prospect for many.

Councillor King commented that she agreed with Councillor Birch's statement and thanked Officers involved in the Local Resilience Forum. Meetings were taking place weekly regarding youth provision. A Covid-19 response pack had been produced in conjunction with partners and had been issued by email. City Fibre had provided

laptops to a number of children. Lots of information is available and a questionnaire had been issued to volunteers to ascertain what else was available. A book would be produced consisting of stories and photos to demonstrate the outstanding work that has been undertaken during this period.

Councillor Birch added Covid-19 has highlighted inequalities in society. Inequalities in health, housing, jobs and opportunities, life expectancy, education, digital inclusion, poverty, hunger, debt. Older people are much more vulnerable to the virus. BAME groups are twice as likely to die from Covid -19. These groups must be offered greater protection if there is to be a second or third spike in infections. Before Covid-19, the greatest areas of growth nationally were the creative industries, leisure and tourism. Leisure and cultural activities are going to be essential to people's wellbeing as everything returns to a more normalised society. Work patterns will change. There will be more working from home. Meetings may be physical or remote. The need for vast office space may be reduced. Councillors and council staff will need a greater level of IT skill and support as this happens. The notion of a balanced budget may be a thing of the past. There will be debt and overspend. There has been 60% loss of income from commercial fees and charges, business rates, council tax and car parks. Overtime payments for staff to deal with the extra administration and extra expense for Covid-19 related spending, extra costs for cleaning and social distancing arrangements.

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

Councillor Nunn presented the Northampton Borough Council's Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 to full Council. He explained the basis of the Policy and highlighted paragraph 9 – Dying to work that had been included in the Policy.

Councillor Larratt seconded the report.

Councillor Stone confirmed that the Labour Group fully supported the Pay Policy and was very pleased that Dying to work and the Living Wage Foundation is included in the Pay Policy. She added that NPH and the Leisure Trust had adopted the Living Wage Policy. Councillor Stone added that she was surprised that the Pay Policy did not make reference to gender pay gap and asked if information relating to gender, age and ethnicity could be provided to the next meeting. Councillor Stone commented that it would be good for staff to be back on national terms and conditions.

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

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2020/21 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report is approved.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Meredith seconded:

“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.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

The Mayor then asked full Council to join him in a round of applause for the staff.

Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor T Eales seconded:

“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."

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

Councillor Nunn proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

"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.'

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was Carried.

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 8:25 pm

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 1

Cllr Duffy to Cllr Hibbert

Domestic violence and abuse is a devastating crime that shatters the lives of victims and families. It is the second highest category of crime in Northampton

Many countries like Australia and New Zealand have found that a major reason why violence continues between the parties is because there is no alternative accommodation for the perpetrator to go to

What provision in Northampton is being made to rehouse the perpetrator?

What provision is there for those in private rental and leasehold properties if they suffer domestic violence and must vacate without the necessary notice, to avoid losing their deposits and therefore making it impossible to move to another property?

Response

The Council's priority will always be to ensure that the victims of domestic violence and abuse are able to remain safely in their home where it is their choice, and where it is safe to do so.

Where a perpetrator is unwilling or unable to move out of the accommodation and they continue to pose a risk to the person(s) they have been violent or abusive to, the Council will inform the victim of their legal options, including injunctions that order the perpetrator not to molest the victim(s) or not to live in the home or enter the surrounding area.

If the Council is the landlord, it will consider the scope for evicting the perpetrator and allowing the victim to remain in their home. However, where there is a probability of violence if the victim remains in their accommodation, the Council would not expect them to remain in, or return to, the accommodation until it is safe to do so. Temporary accommodation may be provided whilst action is taken to exclude or to arrest and detain a perpetrator.

The Council and Northampton Partnership Homes are both represented on Northampton's multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) which leads multi-agency safety planning for high-risk victims of domestic abuse and brings together the Police, independent domestic violence advisers, children's social services, health, social landlords and other relevant agencies. They share information and write a safety plan for each victim and family.

Perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse who are unable to find alternative accommodation should make an appointment to see a Housing Adviser in the Housing Advice & Options Team who will be able to provide them with advice on all of their housing options.

Where a person is living in private rented accommodation and is required to move out of their home suddenly – and without providing their landlord with the required notice – they should ask the landlord not to penalise them financially for the short notice. If the tenant asks the Council for help, the Housing Advice & Options Team will help them negotiate with the landlord and may lend them the deposit to secure another home before their first deposit is returned.

Cllr Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 2

Cllr Duffy to Cllr King

Please can NBC/WNA confirm the Department of Health and Social Care PHE's data agreement has been signed and receipt acknowledged to avoid what happened in Leicester when inaccurate Covid infection information was received

Response

I can confirm that question 2 should be addressed to the Public Health team at the County Council. The Local Outbreak Control Plan has been agreed at a countywide level and appropriate governance structures are being established with elected members involved to oversee this work.'

Cllr A King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 3

Cllr Stone to Cllr Hadland

First can I say how thrilling it is to see the Cobblers come through at Wembley and lift the trophy. The demand for tickets this season is surely going to grow. This makes the questions we have about the club ever more important. Please may I ask the following?:-

1. We know the Memorandum of Understanding entered into in November 2015 between NBC & the club's owners is legally non-binding. But why are none of its commitments being honoured? This includes the commitment of the club's owners to complete the East Stand from their own funds given to the Council in 2015?

Response

We note there are six questions relating to Sixfields following the recent media stories over this. For some time, the football club have been keen to pursue development of land in the area of the Sixfields stadium, and have put forward ideas for a number of possible development schemes.

Although discussions are ongoing between the Club and the Council there are no agreements in place and any deal must deliver best value for the taxpayer.

The non-binding commitments in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) entered into in November 2015, were made at a point in time and have, where possible been largely honoured.

There was no commitment given in the MoU for the completion of the East Stand.

In discussions with NBC, Kelvin Thomas and David Bowers did make commitments at the time to build the East Stand but this was not part of the MoU or any formal binding agreement.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 4

Cllr Stone to Cllr Hadland

2. An article in the Athletic stated that a “significant sum” of money had changed hands in 2017 when the Chinese owned 5UsPort Ltd acquired control of NTFC’s holding company, Northampton Town Ventures Ltd. No receipt of any funds is recorded in the statutory accounts of Ventures or its controlling company at that time, the English registered, Fantastical Ltd. Given the existence of serious questions surrounding this transaction, the wider ethical issue of an English local authority dealing with a company under the ultimate control of an offshore tax haven company in respect of the sale and development of public land, can you confirm that full professional due diligence has been carried out on NTFC and all its connected companies to satisfy the Council of their finances, source of funds and the tracing and whereabouts of any Chinese funds?

Response

As with any commercial transaction the Council enters into appropriate checks will be undertaken at the relevant time to ensure that the Council’s interests are protected.

These checks vary in their scale according to the size and type of agreement, but we can confirm that thorough checks will be undertaken in relation to any transaction around Sixfields.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 5

Cllr Stone to Cllr Hadland

3. Kelvin Thomas in response to the recent media reports said in a BBC Northampton interview on 25 June that he expects any new agreement between the club and the Borough to be open to public scrutiny. Can the Council confirm that all the details of the Option Agreement including any letters of intent, MoUs and the like will be open to scrutiny and debate by all councillors and the wider public before anything is signed?

Response

We can confirm that should there be any deal acceptable to the Council we will follow our established governance processes, including formal decision-making by Cabinet. This will allow scrutiny by the public and councillors in accordance with our normal procedures.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 6

Cllr Stone to Cllr Hadland

Please can we have an update on St Edmunds hospital site-now derelict for 17 years.

Response

The first phase, involving securing, reroofing and other improvements to the fabric of the main building, finished in January. Covid19 has delayed the next stages of the work, but further work is expected to start shortly. The owners have said that the programme is likely to be protracted in view of the fact that it is not possible to obtain external funding for this type of project.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 7

Cllr Birch to Cllr Hallam

There has been a huge reported increase in rats in urban areas. Do we have a policy for dealing with rats? If so, can it be circulated please?

Response

The Council investigates reports of rats and provides advice to residents, taking enforcement action as appropriate. The Council considers specific hardship issues on a case by case basis

Cllr M. Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 8

Cllr Duffy to Cllr King

With the reopening of retail and pubs and the need for social distancing and are there enough officers carrying out this important function and how many are engaged in this work within the Borough?

Response

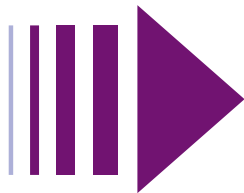
Staff from the environmental health and licensing team have been working with colleagues from the neighbourhood warden team to monitor the situation with premises that are reopening. Wardens are carrying out checks at premises within their areas as part of their routine duties with two members of the team assisting with more focused visits in the town centre and immediate surrounding areas. The officers from the food and safety and licensing teams have been making contact with licensed premises and other businesses that are reopening to provide advice and support about the social distancing requirements. Four members of the team have focused specifically on this work with support from other team members. The environmental health officers across Northamptonshire have worked together to produce guidance for business and a leaflet giving advice to premises that are opening which has been delivered widely across Northampton (electronic copy of the leaflet attached).

The Taxi Marshall contract resumed on Saturday 4 July and will continue through the month of July (reviewed weekly) on a Friday and Saturday evening 7pm-1am.

The Street Pastors are currently working on their preparations to resume patrols, including a review of their volunteer database. They will be looking to resume patrols towards the end of July, as soon as they are practically able to.

Cllr A King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety



Helping you

re-open your business following the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear business owner,

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for business owners, facing forced closures, financial pressures and staff shortages. It is understandable that the prospect of reopening with new safety measures in place may cause you some concern.

All business owners have a legal duty to ensure the safety of staff and other persons in the workplace, and this duty includes reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The Government has produced guidance for different types of business to help you assess risks and work safely during the pandemic. This can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

In Northamptonshire, we have Environmental Health teams in your local Borough and District Councils, who are responsible for ensuring that businesses comply with public health, and health and safety legislation. This includes the safe re-opening and trading of shops to minimise the risks of transmission of COVID-19.

The Environmental Health teams will not necessarily be inspecting your premises before they reopen, however, any business owner who is unsure of what they need to do or wishes to discuss the measures they intend to take prior to opening, can contact their local team using the details on the back of this leaflet and they will be happy to support you to ensure the safe reopening of your premises.

Please look inside for our five most frequently asked questions.



Lucy Wightman | Director of Public Health
Northamptonshire County Council

When can I open?

Some shops and businesses are currently able to open to the public. Other businesses, such as those providing takeaway food, can only operate under specific circumstances.

The Government has stated that from 15 June non-essential shops will be able to open and it is hoped that businesses in the hospitality sector, beauty salons and hairdressers will be able to start to trade again in July.

Up-to-date guidance on which businesses are currently allowed to trade can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close



What are my legal responsibilities?

All employers have a legal duty under health and safety legislation to ensure the safety of staff and other persons in the workplace. This duty includes reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Workers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. This duty includes reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Workers must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.



How do I get started?

You must ensure that you minimise the risk of transmission of the virus and adopt COVID-19 secure practices. To do this you must follow the five steps to working safely, which are:

1. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
2. Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures
3. Help people to work from home, where this is possible
4. Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible
5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Further information on the five steps can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely

Once you have completed these steps you can print off, complete and display the Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020 poster to help provide reassurance to customers and staff.

Download at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb959f5e90e0708370f97f9/staying-covid-19-secure-accessible.pdf>

Where can I find specific guidance to assist me?

The amount of information in the media and on the internet can be confusing. Always use Government guidance to ensure you are meeting your legal obligations. Guidance for working safely during the Coronavirus pandemic is available for different types of work:

- **Construction and outdoor work** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work
- **Factories, plants and warehouses** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/factories-plants-and-warehouses
- **Labs and research facilities** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/labs-and-research-facilities
- **Offices and contact centres** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres

- **Other people's homes** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes
- **Restaurants offering takeaway or delivery** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery
- **Shops and branches** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches
- **Vehicles** - www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles

The guidance will assist you in undertaking a COVID-19 risk assessment and putting appropriate controls in place to minimise the risk of transmission. You may need to refer to more than one of these guides to cover all aspects of your business.

These guides will be kept updated and the Government will publish additional guides as and when other businesses are able to reopen. If your business activity is not currently included you can check for future guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

If you need assistance in how to undertake a risk assessment you can find guidance at www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm

Additional guidance for food businesses can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19

Guidance on how and when to clean your workplace can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

If your building has been closed for any length of time, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. You can find guidance on this at www.hse.gov.uk/news/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm

Scams to businesses - Since early March, there has been a flood of scams targeting UK businesses. They range from Government grant/tax refund scams to Tech support scams. If your business has been targeted by a Covid-19 scam then head to the Businesses against Scams website: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/BAS

Diversification of businesses - As a result of the impact Covid-19 has had on businesses many are exploring diversifying their business model to adapt to 'the new normal'. To assist your business to comply, head to a free expert guide on business diversification during the pandemic: www.businesscompanion.info/focus/coronavirus

If your premises is authorised under the Licensing Act 2003, you must ensure that you comply with your licence and the conditions on it. Any change to your activities may require a variation application. Additional seating for patrons on the highway will require a separate licence, issued by Northamptonshire County Council. Please contact your local Licensing Team if you have any queries.

What if I need further assistance or have a specific query?

For further help you can contact your local Environmental Health Department:



env.health@corby.gov.uk
01536 464175.



healthimprovement@daventrydc.gov.uk
01327 871100



healthprotection@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk
01832 742055



healthprotection@kettering.gov.uk
01536 410333



ehfs@northampton.gov.uk
0300 330 7000



HEP@Southnorthants.gov.uk
01327 322323



HealthProtection@wellingborough.gov.uk
01933 231952



For specific advice relating to trading standards matters, please contact Northamptonshire Trading Standards Service Business@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 9

Cllr Beardsworth to Cllr Hadland?

Following their stunning victory at Wembley and promotion, Northampton Town players and supporters can look forward to a bright future.

Like everyone in the town I wish to see our football club prosper and in particular hope that success on the pitch is matched by improvements to Sixfields Stadium and in particular completion of the long awaited East Stand.

These questions follow on directly from those of Cllr. Stone and are therefore numbered appropriately. Both sets of questions arise from discussions we have had with members of the NTFC Supporters Trust.

4. This agreement is being negotiated at a time when the CPS has not yet filed charges and the KPMG Report is not finalised – what protocols are being followed regarding delegation of authority to councillors & officers to agree terms and involving the section 151 officer?

Response

Any agreement will be made in line with the Council's formal procedures with recommendations being taken to Cabinet for a decision to be made. Relevant Officers, including the section 151 Officer will be involved in the normal way.

Full Due Diligence will be undertaken of any agreement in relation to this matter with appropriate levels of scrutiny.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 10

Cllr Beardsworth to Cllr Hadland?

5.What protections will be contained in any agreement for NTFC (meaning its supporters as distinct from its owners) concerning its original leasehold land and the future retention within the club of income from the development rather than it being moved through the club to repay debt to the club's owners?

Response

There have been no changes to the agreement with CDNL since the agreements entered into in 2015.

Any new agreement will need to consider and undertake the obligations relating to the site as an Asset of Community Value.

It will be up to NTFC, which is a separate legal entity to decide how it allocates its finances relating to its business.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 11

Cllr Beardsworth to Cllr Hadland?

6.The media reports state a 50/50 split of “profits” is agreed between NTFC & NBC from the development. Precisely, what expenditure is to deducted from the top line sale proceeds before determining the actual divisible profit?

Response

The terms of any deal have not yet been agreed and discussions are ongoing.

The Council will comply with its duties to achieve best value for the taxpayers of the town.

Cllr T. Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 12

Cllr Markham to Cllr Hallam?

- 1) Does NBC (or it's contractors) keep a record of areas known to be infested with Japanese Knotweed e.g. maps?
- 2) Does NBC (or it's contractors) carry out periodic treatment of areas known to be infested with Japanese Knotweed?
- 3) Following on from 2) above if not then why not and will a structured programme be introduced with immediate effect?

By contractors I mean those used by Northampton Partnership Homes as well as Street Care Teams. NPH often have to clear gardens that have become overgrown and is responsible for larger landscaped areas around the town.

Response

The NPH Grounds Maintenance Contract requires the Service Provider to train its operatives to recognise Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and other invasive plants and to report these to NPH within 24 hours of identification. We are also compiling a list of less dangerous invasive plants such as ivy or buddleia that can cause potential problems to buildings.

Once identified, the former plants are placed on a 12 month, 4 treatment programme to eliminate the plant and re-inspected every year to determine if any regrowth has occurred. The Service Provider is also required to check boundaries to identify if these plants are growing from an adjoining owner's property/land.

To date, 4 incidents have been identified of which three are in tenant's own gardens (NPH pay for treatment) & 1 incident in an enclosed rear communal garden. NPH have also identified 1 incident on NBC maintained land.

Cllr M. Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment

Questions for Full Council Monday 20th July, 2020

Question 13

Cllr Beardsworth to Cllr Hibbert?

Over the last 3 months the Council in partnership with the Single Homelessness Forum has been successful in providing shelter and other support to people who have previously had nowhere to live.

Moving on from using hotels to working with our university is also a welcome step. However as the motion to last month's council meeting what happens next is not yet clear.

The partnership has plans to use some of the homes created when various office blocks and other buildings are transformed to permanent homes. This will take months however.

1) Is the council or the Forum aware of the scheme being introduced by Cambridge City Council who are using prefabricated units as a solution for single homelessness?

These units can be on site within days and can be used as part of a supported living programme. Importantly the cambridge project has government financial backing.

2) Could such units provide a solution here in Northampton until the long awaited permanent homes from other projects come on stream?

Response

Yes, the Council is aware of the six 'micro-homes' that have been produced to help tackle rough sleeping in Cambridge. Our preference, however, is to use larger, brick-built homes.

Although we will always consider new and innovative ways of tackling, preventing and reducing homelessness, we are asking the Government to provide Northampton with enough capital funding to enable us to purchase 30 one-bedroom homes and six HMOs that will provide permanent homes for 30 former rough sleepers and additional supported housing for another 30 people who are sleeping rough or at risk of having to sleep rough.

If the Government funding is forthcoming, I am expecting most of these additional homes to become available (for the benefit of rough sleepers) by the end of March 2021.

In my Cabinet Member Report, I have described our COVID-19 rough sleeping initiative and its success in moving a very large number of rough sleepers into settled housing. Since the end of March 2020, a total of 80 men and women have now been moved on in this way.

Having accommodated a very large number of rough sleepers in the hotels for three months, we are now accommodating 26 people in one of the University's halls of residence until 31 August 2020. During the next couple of months, we will be moving as many people as possible into settled housing and, depending on the number of people still requiring accommodation at the end of August, we will assess and address our future housing requirements at that point.

Cllr Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing



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 once again virtually, in light of the ongoing Government guidance to work from home wherever possible. Many of these activities and issues are referred to in Cabinet colleagues' reports.

Covid-19

It is over 17 weeks since the Coronavirus pandemic took hold in this country. So many things have changed in the way that we work, but also new opportunities have arisen to improve outcomes for so many people, particularly those more vulnerable across the Borough. In those early weeks it was very much about managing through the pandemic, however, as we have seen more stability come through, both in terms of managing the pandemic nationally and at a more local level, people's focus is now very much on the Recovery Phase.

A lot of the guidelines that we have been working to still remain, which includes working from home wherever we can, and therefore virtually all of the staff are still doing an excellent job based at home, with less than 40 based here in the Guildhall, because of the nature of their work, with rigorous distancing and cleaning precautions in place.

We Elected Members continue to work remotely, and I believe this seems to be working well. At present we don't see any need to consider a return back to the Guildhall, not least because the Government guidance encourages us to continue with the virtual meetings that we have become so accustomed to.

I have continued to keep a focus on the support for businesses, and specifically with regards to Scheme 1 of the Business Grants where we had just over £37m available to us to distribute to qualifying businesses. I am pleased to say that at the end of the first week in July we had given out £32.81m – a tremendous effort by finance and revs and benefits colleagues. The Government then recently announced a second phase of funding, the Discretionary Grant Scheme, where we had £1.7m to distribute. Once again, I am pleased to say that, with the excellent work being done by colleagues in Finance and Economic Growth, that we have paid out £1.187m to 200 businesses.

The importance of enabling the economy to kick start again should not be underestimated. I am therefore pleased, in my role as a Board member of the Town Centre BID, to be involved in the wider Northampton Town Centre Task Force, where we have been meeting regularly to support businesses, particularly those non-essential businesses that were able to reopen, and then more recently on 4th July the wider night time economy, a key strand of our overall business landscape here in Northampton. Again I must praise the range of officers across the Borough that have worked alongside partners in the Police, Health and other Local Authorities to ensure that these businesses have been able to open safely, observing the Covid-19 guidelines that have been issued by Central Government.

We do not underestimate the importance of our partners across the borough and therefore I have maintained regular contact with a number of them including the Leisure Trust, who at present, like all Leisure facilities across the country, are still unable to open, although we are hopeful that this will be changing in the coming weeks.

In terms of productivity, as you will have seen from the Cabinet meetings that we have held through Zoom, there is still a lot of work being concluded. Our agenda for July is good example of this, as it covers important areas such as Public Space Protection Orders, Housing Policy and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our beautiful Guildhall.

Future Northants Activity

With the reset of the Programme and the focus on 'Safe & Legal Plus', the activity is significantly increasing across the Programme as we work towards Vesting Day on 1st April 2021.

Thank you to those Members who joined the member briefing on 7th July. This was a comprehensive overview of progress, and included updates on the Unitary Programme, the integration of Health & Social Care, and the Children's Trust, and it provided the opportunity for NBC members to ask questions of the Senior Officers leading all of these areas of work. Further briefings are due to take place in the future, on a regular basis, and I would urge as many of you as possible to dial into these meetings where you can.

We have had a further meeting of the West Northants Executive Committee, which is the key decision-making body for the Shadow Authority, as it prepares the way for the new West Northamptonshire Council. These will continue on a monthly basis, right the way through until Vesting Day. At our most recent meeting we received updates on the Programme and also a Protocol with regards to the Disposal of Assets or spend over £100k that hasn't been budgeted for by each sovereign Council.

Task & Finish groups have been formed, made up of five Elected Members on each. I chair the Communications & Engagement group, which will maintain an overview of communications so that members, staff, partner organisations, residents and residents' groups are all kept aware of the progress towards the new council. We are now beginning work on the visual identity, including branding and logo, for the new West Northamptonshire Council, which will need to be carefully considered, and we will be looking to seek informally the views of the public, Elected Members and staff on some early designs in the near future.

I am also actively involved in the Vision and Values Task & Finish Group, alongside Cllr. Stone, and several meetings have taken place, starting to scope out what we would want to see as the Vision and the Values that need to be built into the DNA of the new organisation, as well as the behaviours that we would expect both Members and colleagues to display. Again, good progress is being made in this area.

The third Task & Finish group that I am actively involved in is the Senior Appointments, where the work primarily has been focussed on the process for recruiting the new permanent Chief Executive of the Council. The closing date for applications has now passed for the role, and we are now progressing the next stages including long-listing applicants, as well as planning for the more detailed interview and assessment process at the short-listing stage.

Outside of those more formal meetings, I have also had the opportunity to meet with the two Interim Statutory Officers supporting George Candler in his role as Interim CEO of the Shadow Authority. Susan Zeiss is the Interim Monitoring Officer and Martin Henry the Interim S151 Officer, and meeting with them both individually has helped me to understand more of their roles.

Similarly, the NBC Unitary Working Group, made up of cross-party members, recently had its first meeting since March, where the Chief Executive and I were able to take colleagues through a range of updates.

Economic Growth

Activity in this area continues at a pace and once again the Northampton Forward Board has continued to meet, particularly as we needed to submit the final Strategic Business Case for our bid into the Future High Street Funds. I am pleased to say that bid has now been submitted, where we are looking to secure over £12m worth of investment to regenerate one of the buildings in the Market Square, but more fundamentally to invest over £9m to transform the Market Square. You may remember that there was significant consultation in December 2019 and January of this year, and therefore we are confident that we have put forward the best submission we could, hopeful of hearing of a positive outcome later in the summer.

Separate to this and some time ago, we took a paper through Cabinet for a significant acquisition in Abington Street and I am pleased to say that this is likely to be concluded in the coming weeks. We have heard further news that, as part of the Town Fund, we will be able to access £1m of that straight away, which we intend to utilise to accelerate the works on this particular site and bring forward much-needed housing as part of our wider Masterplan of Town Centre living in the Borough.

Myself, the Chief Executive, the Acting Director of Economy & Assets and colleagues recently met with the Towns Fund team, a dedicated team funded through MHCLG, to work with us on the development of our Town Investment Plan. This plan is a prerequisite that needs to be complete before we can look to secure any funding. The opportunity for funding is still £25m, but also for exceptional cases bids can be submitted for up to £50m. Feedback from Government is that the strength of bids to these regeneration funds is an important factor, and an important part of a strong bid is being able to calculate and evidence clear economic benefit that will result from the public investment.

The Waterside Enterprise Zone is a key strand of our wider Growth agenda across the Borough and I chaired the most recent meeting in July, where again we were able to update the Board on progress on a number of schemes that sit within the Zone, including Four Waterside and further development that is anticipated at the Railway Station.

Sub-regional Activities

As we move to a period of stability, the Sub-regional meetings have started to increase again and, as I have mentioned before, it is important that Northampton is represented at these meetings to ensure that we are aware of future funding opportunities, and also that we, through myself, continue to make a strong case for further investment into Northampton. In the last few weeks I have attended a specific meeting around kick-starting the economy, entitled 'Beyond Lockdown' that was run through SEMLEP, as

well as one of their more regular meetings on Finance, Risk and Audit. I also attended the recent East Midlands Council meeting in July.

Other Activities

The importance of Culture is well advocated across the Borough, and therefore I have been particularly keen to stay in touch with the Royal & Derngate as they continue to remain closed in line with Government guidance. Through the Chief Executive, we have maintained close regular dialogue with Arts Council England to ensure that any potential funding that is available from the recently-announced Government support package does come to Northampton and our many important cultural organisations.

Similarly, the Chief Executive and I have had meetings recently with representatives of the Leathercraft Museum, currently based on the top floor of the Grosvenor Centre, with a view to establishing a National Centre for Leather here in the town. We continue to discuss potential sites that might act as a base for this exciting project.

Work continues in the new Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, and I was pleased to do a piece for BBC Look East, where we had the opportunity show the further progress on this incredibly impressive building. Covid-19 has stretched the time needed for the fit out and final phases, with necessary distancing precautions also making it harder for different strands of the work to be undertaken simultaneously, and members will recall that prior to covid-19 we were on schedule to reopen the museum on 20th June, so we are now anticipating it opening around the end of this year.

Similarly in terms of media, I have also spoken on the importance of funding for the Arts, our submission into the Future High Streets Fund, as well as Northampton's response to the easing of lockdown measures on the night time economy.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council



Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

20th July 2020

As Deputy Leader of the Council, I have continued to play an active role in the establishment of a Unitary Council for West Northamptonshire and the transition to it as a member of the Shadow Executive and as Chair of two Task & Finish Groups – Civic Matters and Equalities. However, I'm 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

As the town reopens from lockdown, the market has continued to play a vital role in providing fresh food and services to customers. Most traders have returned despite the footfall being approximately 50% of its pre Covid level. Also, they have benefitted from the governments' discretionary grant fund to assist with their business costs.

The market has also welcomed two new traders with a further two scheduled to start later in July.

Due to the pandemic there are no events planned for the foreseeable future and we continue to work closely with our traders and partners to ensure the safety of our customers.

Councillor Development / Democratic Services

Meetings are continuing to be held virtually over Zoom and have attracted a lot of public interest, for example: Annual Council attracted 255 views, Planning Committee has attracted over 220 views at one of its meetings and more recently 97 views, whereas the first meeting of Overview and Scrutiny that was held remotely had 50 views. Cabinet attracted the interest of 125 individuals viewing the meeting on YouTube.

My thanks goes to all our Democratic Services and other personnel who have facilitated our transition to remote meetings and events so successfully.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is celebrating 20 years of Scrutiny at the end of July 2020. A Zoom event of a Panel of people who have been involved in Scrutiny in some way at various points over the past two decades will take place as part of the celebration. The Democratic and Member Services Manager, NBC, has been invited, and has accepted, to join this Panel to share experiences of scrutiny at Northampton over the years.

The Mayor, on his YouTube account and Facebook account is recording and publishing events remotely too. VE day was a great success as was Armed Forces Day.

Member briefings are continuing with them being held remotely. Members received details of the Local Plan Part 2 on 6th July 2020 and on 7th July 2020 received an update on Local Government Reorganisation. A further session hosted by an

external provided is scheduled for 21st July about Member involvement in the pre-planning application process.

Legal Services

The current Covid situation has delayed all the Council's ongoing civil and criminal Court proceedings and has prevented it from commencing any new proceedings in any Court. This situation may change as time progresses but there will be a significant backlog for the Courts to deal with, which will probably cause further delay.

Street Lighting

The streetlight project continues to progress well. The Racecourse looks far better having had the new lights installed. We continue to receive good and positive feedback from the public where the new lights are in situ.

However, Balfour Beatty are reporting a 4-week contract overrun in the contract due to the amount of lights being fed from private and unknown sources. We have had another contractor checking for supplies and updating locations to feed back to Balfour Beatty for them to be actioned. Costs are still within the agreed budget figures and there will be no additional payments for time delays.

Rail Issues

Public consultation on the England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport Strategy is due to start on 14th July. The document will set out a policy framework for strategic transport provision and investment in the Heartland Region to 2050. As mentioned in my report to the previous meeting, this document includes a section on improving East West rail connectivity and makes reference to the benefits that this could have, in combination with the delivery of HS2, for North-South rail connectivity along key corridors such as Northampton – Milton Keynes / Bletchley - Aylesbury – Old Oak Common. The consultation will close on 6th October 2020. It is intended that the Council will submit representations in response to this consultation reflecting our aspirations for better rail connectivity for Northampton.

Flooding

The survey report documents regarding water courses referred to in my last report are still being considered by officers. Some urgent works are being undertaken on an ad-hoc basis. We continue to liaise with the County Council Flood Risk Team on anything reported to them regarding issues with our water courses. The works to Billing Lakes are nearing completion which will assist with holding water and slowing flow rates

Governance Review

We are continuing to pursue the transfer of assets to our established Parish Councils where they have indicated a wish to take them on.

Consideration needs to be given to the assets that are to be transferred to the new Town Council, Kingsthorpe Parish Council, and Far Cotton & Delapre Community Council. A meeting of the Governance Review Working Group will be held in August to start considering these transfers.

Councillor Phil Larratt
Deputy Leader of the Council

July 2020

Planning Policy

Public consultation on the revised Submission Draft of the Local Plan Part 2, Policies Map and Sustainability Appraisal started on 13th July for a six-week period ending at 5pm on Monday 24th August. The Plan is available to view on the Council's website and residents can also request access to a hard copy at the Guildhall.

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. Work on the local list continues and is progressing well.

Development Management

- Planning application N/2019/0612 for the erection of purpose built student accommodation (347 no. rooms with 356 no. bed-spaces) with ancillary student hub was approved in principle by the Planning Committee on 19th May 2020, subject to a S106 agreement to secure planning obligations.
- Planning application N/2019/1356 for the removal of existing internal unit division to create open floors at ground and first floor. Change of use of open ground and first floors to flexible multi-class uses of retail (Use Class A1), financial and professional services (Use Class A2), restaurant/cafe (Use Class A3), drinking establishment (Use Class A4) and hot food takeaway (Use Class A5) inclusive and Leisure (Use Class D2). Change of use of second floor from Retail (Use Class A1) to Hotel (Use Class C1). Alteration to shop front on Abington Street and part removal of atrium roof at roof level at Market Walk Shopping Centre, Market Square was approved on 15th May 2020.
- Outline planning application N/2018/0351 for the demolition of part of existing Plough Hotel and erection of a 35no. serviced apartment building (Use Class C1), at Plough Hotel, Bridge Street was approved on 19th June 2020.
- Planning application N/2020/0155 for the proposed extension of Northampton General Hospital to provide new entrance, retail and reception provision, realigned private road and rearranged parking layout was approved on 22nd June 2020.
- 100% performance for major, minor and other applications in May to June 2020.

Building Control

- Received 13 Full plan application May 2020.
- Received 29 Building Notices May 2020.
- Received and actioned 4 Dangerous Structures reports May 2020.
- Received to 37 notifications for the commencement of work May 2020
- Issued to date 26 completion certificates May 2020

- To date carried out 158 inspections (including virtual inspections) May 2020.100% of inspections booked on the same day have been carried out (including virtual inspections) in May 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 (local land and property gazetteer) which feeds into all property data bases within NBC and externally to Police, Fire service etc. this is reported on monthly by a central hub. We currently have a rating of ANS (achieving national standard) which reflects the fact we have some property data to update following the addition of new criteria in April 2020.

Cllr James Hill
Cabinet Member for Planning



Councillor Community Fund

Since 1 April 2020, a total of £29,205 has been spent by councillors on supporting the delivery of positive outcomes in their wards. £14,900 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

The organisations awarded a Partnership Grant for 2020/21 include:

Northamptonshire Rape Crisis, a charity providing counselling and support for survivors of sexual abuse and their non-offending family, £10,600.

Northampton Street Pastors, providing teams of fully trained volunteers to support the town's community in keeping safe, £6,600.

Growing Together, a community-based charity working in deprived estates in the East of the borough, £7,000.

Spencer Contact, a local community group that works to relieve those in poverty and hardship in and around Northampton by supplying free second-hand furniture, £6,000.

Warts and All Theatre, a performing arts group that inspire and encourage artists, audiences and members of the community to engage in theatre, £6,000.

The Lowdown, a charity offering a broad range of support services to children and young adults, £7,080.

The Good Loaf, an artisan bakery providing training and employment opportunities for vulnerable females, including offenders, £5,000.

MHA Live at Home, a charity improving the quality of life for older people by providing care, accommodation and support services, £5,000.

Northampton Community Sheds, a not for profit organisation working locally to shape and improve the physical and mental health of older people whilst learning new skills and teaching some of their own, £6,500.

Singing for Breathing, a singing group for people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and other respiratory conditions such as asthma, providing physical, mental and social benefits, £4,720.

Tools for self-reliance, a charity providing work experience and voluntary opportunities for adults with disabilities, health issues or other disadvantages, £5,500.

Silhouette Youth, a community-based youth work organisation that is using performing arts to engage young people and increase confidence, aspirations and social skills in deprived areas of Northampton, £10,000.

Bellinge Community House run structured and supported youth group sessions for vulnerable 8 to 11 year olds, £10,000.

Re:Store, a charity run by the Central Vineyard Church and supported by local people, to serve those in need within the town, £5,000.

Emmanuel Group of Churches provides a range of social outreach projects including the Weston Favell food bank, £5,000.

Northampton Community Resilience Hub

Total requests for support through the Northampton Community Resilience Hub totals 1,023.

We have seen a decline in the number of referrals over the last couple of weeks, but we are completing call backs with all referrals to identify those requiring ongoing support.

Breakdown of the figures include:

62% food (collection, parcels, shopping), 25% prescriptions, 7% loneliness, 1% support to get online and 5% other.

Recovery planning continues with partners and a plan has been developed, focussing on mental health and exploring a place-based pilot with VIN and health partners, the areas being looked at will include those that have been identified with the highest unmet need.

We are working with more than 100 organisations - important to continue these relationships and provide support to these groups at neighbourhood level post COVID19 – looking to do this through the community development team and working with partners, ACRE, VIN and NCF.

Forums

22 June 2020 - A facebook event page was established to share information regarding the history of windrush. This included links to other events, interviews from local people related to the windrush, short films, poetry/spoken word and music.

Launched a campaign for LGBTQ stories as part of a town centre installation project in partnership with Grosvenor centre in the lead up to Pride.

Virtual Pride took place on 18 July – included videos of performers, artists, and topical speakers which created a virtual festival celebrating Pride.

11 July 2020 – Virtual event held to commemorate Srebrenica.

Working with the Chairs of the Friends Groups and the Park Management Committees – collating videos to promote their parks and recruit volunteers as part of a Virtual Love Parks Week (July 12 – 21).

Events

No outdoor events were held throughout June in line with the Governments lockdown restrictions. On the 4th July, government relaxed some restrictions, but this did not include general outdoor events.

However, we did celebrate Armed Forces Day through a virtual programme of activities including speeches and presentations from the following individuals, businesses and groups:

- Cllr Brian W Sargeant, Mayor of the Borough of Northampton
- Lord Lieutenant James Saunders Watson
- High Sheriff Paul Parsons
- Northampton County Council Chairman Cllr Stephen Legg
- Northampton Borough Council Leader Cllr Jonathan Nunn
- Lieutenant Colonel Jane Chappell Chairman Northamptonshire Reserve Forces and Cadet Association
- Northampton Sea Cadets – a look into Sea Cadet life
- Goodwill Solutions
- Wilson Brown Solicitors
- Gallery – Remembering Northampton’s Armed Forces Day Parade 2019
- Gallery - 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment – “The Poachers”

Culture & Heritage

Abington Park Museum remains closed due to Covid-19. We are reviewing safe working practices and procedures for opening the museum in line with government and museum sector guidance. Abington Park Museum will open once we have conducted a thorough review and ensured visiting Abington Park Museum is safe for visitors and staff alike.

Museum Expansion Project

Wildgoose contractors have returned to site and are finishing off last elements of build work and are completing snagging items. A site meeting was held to review all outstanding items and agree a closeout programme.

A revised installation programme for the exhibition galleries has been developed and mobilisation work is underway off site. Once all contractors are off site a deep clean of the building will be carried out and installation will begin. Installation will need to follow social distancing guidelines and remain Covid Safe. It is anticipated the museum will open late 2020/early 2021

Customer Services

Have managed to deliver an interrupted service whilst balancing Covid19. We are continuing to support the Community Cell by completing Welfare checks.

We are planning for the increased impact and vulnerabilities due to a potential increase in unemployment and debt.

Our training and Quality team have recently attended ‘Supporting Vulnerable Service Users’ training provided by Government Events. This has helped our team to identify the core considerations needed whilst providing a service to an increasingly vulnerable population. Training outcomes included;

- Understand what vulnerability is and how it affects individuals
- Discover different approaches to help recognise potentially vulnerable customers
- Identify the specific needs customers have when dealing with organisations
- Gain practical knowledge on how to adapt service levels to effectively meet these needs

The attendees found the course beneficial and are designing and planning training sessions for our frontline advisors.

Managers are attending 'How a crisis influences behaviours; training hosted by East Midlands Councils This will help managers supporting their staff through change, enabling them to remain motivated and engaged. It focuses on helping people rebuild their resilience and remain optimistic. The session will equip managers with an awareness of how behaviour can change during difficult times so they can better support their staff.

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour

The multi-agency case management meetings for Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime, Cuckooing and Youth Violence – all re-established and taking place via the zoom platform.

There are currently 22 active cases being managed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Case Managers.

10 x neighbour disputes (13 CPW's (Community Protection Warning's) and 1 CPN (Community Protection Notice) issued)

6 x street drinkers/beggars (2 CPW and 2 CPN's issued)

2 x female perpetrator targeting vulnerable individuals for money/place to stay etc (1 CPW and 1 CPN issued)

1 x youth nuisance (1 Acceptable Behaviour Contract issued)

3 x perpetrators causing harassment, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour (2 CPN's issued)

Furthermore:

4 x gang related/ASB injunctions have been submitted to deal with gang violence on the Eastern part of the Town.

7 x CPW's issued and 1 ASB injunction and 1 Cuckooing injunction being progressed to tackle issues on the North East part of the Town.

Newsletter developed with youth providers – promoting youth services that are available for young people in the Town, circulated widely amongst frontline officers across the partnership.

Gates for Jeyes Jetty, following the approval of the PSPO and Planning gained, to be installed imminently.

Councillor Anna King
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety



Cabinet Member Report for Environment

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 22nd July, 2020

Environmental Services Contract

Now that we have moved to the recovery phase in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic shielding and sickness is still having an impact on the refuse collection teams, drivers, street cleansing staff, grounds maintenance teams and administrative staff at Veolia but other than the rescheduling of a few food rounds, the core services continue to perform well and are coping with the increases in demand.

The Contracts Manager is sending regular service reports to Councillor, Parishes and other stakeholders on an exception basis only due to services having stabilised and the reports have helped keep recipients and their networks engaged.

Basketball courts, Tennis Courts, Allotments shops and the Aviary have now re-opened having been risk assessed and new processes put in place to maintain social distancing.

The opening of Parks caused a number of challenges in relation to the high volume of anti-social behaviour including littering and lack of social distancing. The teams worked exceptionally hard to safely open the toilets and implement a greatly enhanced cleaning regime and also provide additional resources in the Parks to cope with the increased volumes of rubbish generated.

Veolia have now instigated a deep cleanse programme in hard to access streets, the inaugural cleanse happened in June in Southampton Road, residents were very helpful in helping move cars to allow better access to the curblin. The high volumes of cars parked in streets due to working from home has provided challenges across the Borough as these would usually be clear and support the cleansing regime.

Chargeable Green Waste Subscriptions

At the time of writing there were 33244 subscriptions (as at 30th June 2020) well in excess of our initial target, Customer Feedback has been very positive in relation to the service and the ease of sign-up.

Environmental Services

April, May and early June, the day to day work of the Neighbourhood Wardens had changed dramatically from dealing with environmental crime to assisting the most vulnerable within our communities by delivering much needed food and medical supplies to them.

However, June did see the Neighbourhood Wardens return to dealing with environmental crime on their Wards, as well as monitoring businesses that are open to ensure they are complying with the Governments Social Distancing Guidance.

The Park Rangers are continuing with their day to day tasks. There has been an increase in vandalism within some of the parks, but this could be down to individuals having a lot of time on their hands. The number of rough sleepers found in the parks has drastically reduced. Social Distancing signs on play equipment have been ripped down and are

having to be replaced regularly by the Rangers. They were also advising park users on the Social Distancing rules.

June, also seen the restart of projects that were put on hold in March, because of the Pandemic. Work has now started on the installation of play equipment at:

- Lingswood
- Kingsthorpe Rec.
- Hardingstone Rec.
- Newnham Road

The repairs to Abington Park’s main lake embankment will begin mid-July and should be completed within 8 - 10 weeks. The works can be carried out without the need to drop the water level, so protecting the fish and the natural habitat. The Abington Angling Club can also continue to fish from the opposite bank.

Environmental Health

Officers from the food and safety and licensing team continue to support the business community as they return to work. Staff in the team have worked with colleagues across the county to develop a countywide leaflet providing advice on steps to be taken when re-opening premises, information on social distancing and safe working. The leaflets have been circulated to businesses across the town and distributed through a range of networks.

Budget carry forward reserves	Opening Balance 01/04/20 £
Business Incentive Scheme	55,000
Museums	27,520
Sub-Total - Economy, Assets and Culture	82,520
Small Grants	31,481
Cllr Community Fund	12,452
Sub-Total - Chief Exec	43,933
JPU - Local Plan	122,100
Planning Policy	414,110
Neighbourhood Planning	26,920
Conservation Area Article 4 Advertising	24,604
Sub-Total - Planning	587,734
Totals	714,187

Officers have also made visits to check compliance with social distancing and business closure requirements and provided phone and email advice to many businesses.

Air quality monitoring has restarted at the 90 Nox tube sites across the town. The annual Air Quality Status report for 2019 was submitted to DEFRA ahead of the end of June deadline. Once the report is approved it will be published on the website,

Work on the installation of EV charging points started in March, but had to be suspended due to the Government’s Lockdown – work is due to resume again shortly.

Cabinet Member for Environment

Protecting Rough Sleepers from COVID-19

As I explained in my last report of 15th June, emergency hotel accommodation was provided for rough sleepers and residents of the Nightshelter from 27th March until 30th June.

During that period, more than 140 people spent at least one night in the hotels and, when they were at their busiest in April, the two hotels (Travelodge in Gold Street and Holiday Inn Express in Grange Park) were accommodating up to 90 men and women, between them, each night.

By the time the Council's 'block booking' arrangement with the hotels ended on 30th June, a total of 76 people had been helped to move on into settled housing. Half of these moved into homes managed by the Northampton single homelessness charity, NAASH.

On 1st July, 26 hotel guests moved into one of the University's halls of residence as part of the second phase of Northampton's multi-agency plan to ensure that as few rough sleepers as possible return to the streets. The hall of residence is available, for this use, until 31st August.

As almost two thirds of the rough sleepers currently being accommodated were originally from Eastern Europe and many of them have previously been living in the tent encampments and makeshift shelters on the outskirts of Northampton, we have enlisted the help of International Lighthouse (a Northampton-based community interest company) to provide them with specialist advice and assistance, using native speakers, on matters relating to the EU Settlement Scheme, their eligibility for welfare benefits, and the housing options that are available to them.

I would like to take this opportunity to place on record my sincere thanks to the Travelodge and the Holiday Inn Express for responding so rapidly and positively to our urgent request for help in dealing with this COVID-19 public health emergency. The two hotels, and all of their staff, provided the rough sleepers with a very warm welcome and created an environment in which so many of them thrived and seized the opportunity to engage with services and rebuild their lives.

Provision of Temporary Accommodation during COVID-19

The number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation (excluding the rough sleepers who have been accommodated in the hotels) has remained fairly constant during the COVID-19 lockdown, fluctuating between 350 and 360.

We are very concerned about the increase in homelessness that is likely to be caused by COVID-19, including people's loss of employment, and next month's end to the ban on evictions.

Additional HMO Licensing

Since the approval of the Additional HMO Licensing Scheme, the Council has received more than 100 licence applications in relation to properties that are occupied by 3 or 4 people and were previously outside of the HMO licensing regime. These properties are now being licensed and will be inspected when the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

The licensing of Additional HMOs supports the Council's work in raising the standards in Northampton's private rented sector, encouraging behaviour change and tackling criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.

Home Adaptations Team – Disabled Facilities Grants

The COVID-19 public health emergency has had a significant impact on residents and their confidence in allowing Officers and contractors to visit their homes and undertake works.

As the lockdown restrictions are eased, the Home Adaptations Team will focus on meeting the demand for home visits and adaptations, and commissioning home adaptation works.

I am grateful to the local contractors for the way in which they have responded to the COVID-19 restrictions, changed their operating practices and undertaken works in the most urgent cases.

Housing Enforcement Team – Inspections and Illegal Evictions

Although COVID-19 has reduced the number of enforcement inspections carried out, the demands on the Housing Enforcement 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 (NPH)

Looking after its staff and the Council's tenants and leaseholders remains NPH's priority.

Emergency maintenance and essential compliance, safety works

At the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown, NPH reduced its maintenance service to an emergency repairs service. It is now returning to a more normal service with non-urgent repairs being undertaken in homes 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 and has received assurance from the Minister that no action will be taken against the Council for non-compliance during this time.

NPH has a small number of properties outside of the gas regulations timescales and it is working closely with those tenants to carry out the gas servicing as soon as it is safe to do so.

Neighbourhoods and housing services

Reports of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and fly tipping have all increased. Although some of the enforcement measures that are normally used are not possible at the moment, NPH is dealing with reported cases of ASB as quickly as possible and is working closely with the Police to keep the neighbourhoods safe.

In line with Government instructions, evictions have been put on hold. This is having an impact on rent recovery and ASB. Where there are serious cases of ASB (such as in Drayton Walk where the police have been actively dealing with drug-related ASB issues) NPH is working closely with the Police to address them.

New build development works

NPH has worked very hard to keep its construction sites running, whilst ensuring safe working and social distancing, and it has continued to support the local economy wherever possible.

Work on new build sites is now gathering pace and NPH has continued to progress and develop proposals for new schemes, including a number of major developments.

The acquisition of Beaumont House and Riverside House are now complete and work will soon be underway to convert these two redundant office blocks into a total of 120 apartments. (The Renal Unit on the ground floor of Riverside House will be retained).

Materials supplier

Travis Perkins' materials contract expired on 1st April 2020 and, following a comprehensive tender exercise, NPH awarded the new contract to Grafton's (Buildbase).

The new supplier is now delivering the materials direct to tenants' homes, and this is helping to improve NPH's efficiency in carrying out repairs and improvements.

Looking Forward

NPH is working on a COVID-19 "recovery plan" and business transformation plan that will include a staged return to business and a new way of working which 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 Finance

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th July, 2020

Finance

The Finance Teams continue to finalise the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019-20, whilst still working with the Auditors (due to return in October 2020) on the Accounts for 2018-19.

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.

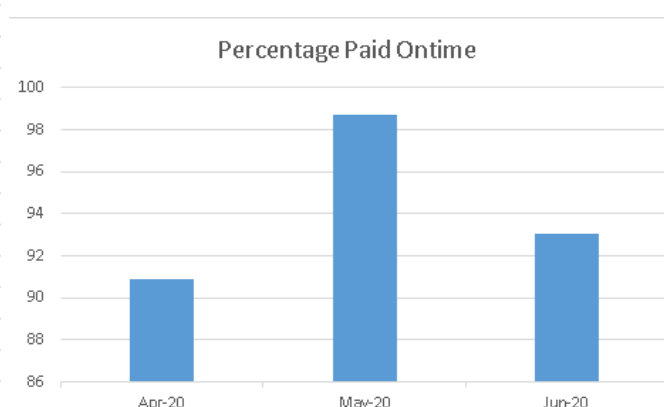
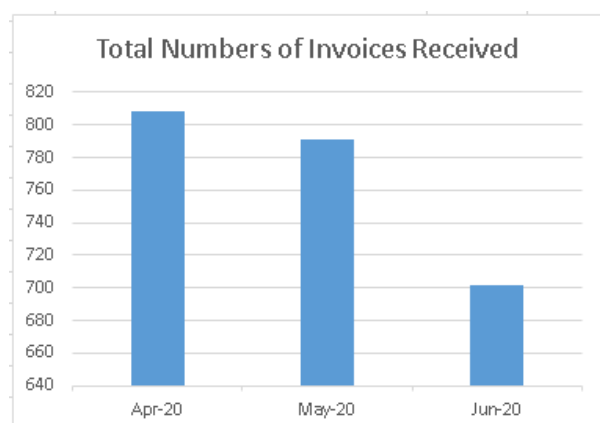
Cabinet received a report on 27 May 2020 on Covid Finance impacts. We continue as a Cabinet and in conjunction with the Corporate Management Board to regularly review the costs incurred, income lost and grant funding available. A further update will be given at Cabinet on 22 July 2020.

At the time of writing we have been made aware that there will be further Government funding made available, either as a general grant to support us, or ring-fenced grants to assist with specific services, with a possible contribution to income lost from normal Council activities (fees and charges).

In addition to the funding for NBC, we will be receiving a grant of £31,645.92 to be passported across to the two Northampton BIDs (£14,876.92 to the Town Centre and £20,769.00 to Brackmills) to support their activities and risk to funding.

NBC currently has £3.839M of debt, this is a growth from the end of 2019-20, which will in part due to the fact NBC has, in accordance with Government Guidance not sought to actively pursue debt during the initial three months of the pandemic. Soft reminders are now being processed during July and normal processes and action will recommence in August.

Although the Accounts Payable/Receivable Team have suffered from reduced resources as a result of the pandemic, they continue to operate a good service and seek to pay invoices on time, despite the complexities of remote working and new processes.



Revenues & Benefits

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

Council Tax collection remains volatile, at present the core collection rate has not dropped materially, however our forecasts suggest that once the furlough schemes come to an end, we can anticipate an increase in benefit claims and a reduction in Council Tax payments received.

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. The two schemes continue to run, with the majority of funds for Scheme Two having been paid. We are actively seeking to engage further with the remaining c200 'premises' that may be eligible under Scheme One.

At the time of writing I am pleased to advise that our teams have distributed c2,600 grants to business in our Borough, with a value of over £32.5M. We continue to seek out the remaining businesses that may qualify for this grant.

We launched our second scheme on 1st June 2020 and have at the time of writing, distributed over 180 grants with a value of £1.1M. 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 relief across the Small Business, Retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Nurseries sectors. Cancelling and adjusting all of these bills has consumed more of this service resource.

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 are mindful that with the Furlough Scheme being phased out, there may be an increase in job losses leading to an increased activity in benefit claims and a reduction in Council Tax collected.

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

Facilities Management

The Facilities Team like many businesses, have suffered income loss for bookings etc. With the lockdown easing, there is a revival of enquiries and with some future bookings being taken.

The teams continue to work 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

The wider teams continue to actively support the wider front-line services in respect of HR matters, Wellbeing, Health & Safety, ICT and general financial support.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance

Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration & Enterprise



Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th July 2020

ECONOMY AND ASSETS

Property Maintenance

Current Programmes include:-

- Billing Brook Lakes phase 2 nearing completion
- Rectory Farm community centre extension now complete
- Streetlight project ongoing within budget and timescale
- Blackthorn Community Centre extension looking to start within 4 weeks

Corporate Assets

Sites identified in the May Cabinet paper as community sites for asset transfer are progressing, Parish Councils in negotiations as both parties continue the due diligence process. It is possible that not all the sites will be transferred should the relevant Parish Council decide not to proceed.

As a reminder the sites agreed are:-

- a) Land adjacent to Little Billing Pocket Park (adjacent to site owned by Billing Parish Council)
- b) Ecton Brook Playing Fields
- c) Bellinge Community House
- d) Bellinge Community Centre
- e) Errington Park
- f) Grafton Way Park
- g) Melbourne Lane Open Space
- h) Mendip Park
- i) Blackymore Open Space and Community Centre
- j) Grangewood Park
- k) Penn Valley Park (Penvale Park)
- l) The Elgar Centre (includes land)
- m) St Crispin Community Centre (includes land)
- n) Farmclose Road Green
- o) Park from Curtlee Hill to Quinton Road
- p) Land Tudor Court to Curtlee Hill

- The programme of disposal of general fund community shops is progressing. |Most of the tenants have confirmed an interest in taking this forward subject to due diligence. Valuers have been instructed and tenants are being kept informed of the process.
The Rectory Farmhouse disposal has slowed due to COVID 19 and the restrictions on gatherings including Auctions.
- The Asset team are supporting Regeneration with the roll out of Citifibre data installations with contracts nearing completion and resources established to the role out.
- The Corporate Asset Strategy is being refreshed to be brought to Cabinet in September, it will include processes for disposal and acquisitions.

Town Centre

All council car parks reintroduced parking charges on Monday 30 June 2020.

Within our multi-story car parks we have introduced new safeguards including sanitiser stations and screens between payment machines to support users and signage throughout promoting social distancing.

Within the Bus Station, an enhanced cleaning programme was introduced at the start of lockdown and continues at this time to support bus users, bus drivers and staff.

Footfall across the town centre has fallen as expected with the C-19 lockdown restrictions with current numbers around 50% less than 2019 figures for the same period.

We are working closely with the BID and town centre businesses offering advice and support as they look to reopen as the lockdown restrictions are relaxed.

Economic Growth and Regeneration

- The Future High Street Fund: The Northampton Forward Board has submitted a final bid for over £12m to the Government's Future High Streets Fund, that will aim to redevelop the Market Square, attract more visitors and create new jobs. The board has put forward its final plan following public consultations, and with input from key stakeholders in Northampton's future, via Northampton Forward, a partnership involving a wide range of public and private sector partners who have come together to create a vision for the town and drive forward a strategic programme of improvements incorporated in the Town Centre Masterplan. The bid builds on the earlier work and consultations around the town centre, which identified catalyst regeneration projects including Marefair and Gold Street, Market Square, Greyfriars, Fish Street and St Giles Street and Abington Street, all aligned to the board's long-term strategic objectives for Northampton town centre.
- 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 develop a Town Investment Plan (TIP) which should

focus on driving economic and productivity growth through investment in connectivity, land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure. There are three cohorts for submissions in July 2020, October 2020, March 2021, We are aiming to submit in the October cohort. MHCLG has been provided £173k of revenue funding for the whole process including the Town Investment Plan and further business case development. We are aiming to employ consultants from a range of disciplines to commence work in early July 2020 in order to meet this tight deadline.

- 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 and stage 1 of the work is complete. The consultant team have engaged with key stakeholders and will continue do so and are now exploring facility mix options and will be going out to consultation.
- 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. 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. Payments started to be made in early June and the deadline for applications closed at the end of June.
- Vulcan Works Cultural Hub – Work is still progressing on site, capacity has now increased and shift work has now been put in place to ensure COVID-19 government guidance is adhered to. Developments continue with the partitioning of units within Angel Street complete and St John's almost complete. Decoration is now taking place in parts of Angel Street with one unit almost complete to demonstrate what a final unit will look like in that block. The scaffolding has been removed on Angel Street to reveal the façade and the truss installations and replacements are continuing on the Victorian Workshops. The site has continued to remain open and operational during the COVID-19 pandemic. These have yet to be determined. Work is still progressing on the Operator Tender however, as the EG&R team have been tied up with the distribution of the different grant

schemes there has been an unavoidable delay. The final tender package is now almost complete.

Cllr Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise

Appendices: 1



COUNCIL

20 JULY 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Borough Secretary

Report Title	Member/Officer Relations Protocol
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the recommendations in respect of the Member/Officer Protocol made to full Council by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 29 June 2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended:
 - 2.1.1 That full Council notes and thanks the Standards Committee and relevant officers for their work on the Protocol on Member/Officer relations.
 - 2.2. That full Council considers the comments of the Standards Committee on the draft Protocol on Member / Officer relations, subject to any additions Members may consider appropriate.
 - 2.1.1 That full Council approves the Member/Officer Relations Protocol attached as Appendix one for adoption into the Council's Constitution and delegates the power to the Monitoring Officer to incorporate the changes into the constitution.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 In December 2018 internal audit made recommendations on various issues relating to member/officer relations at the Council. The audit included interviewing various Officers and Members to obtain their views on working relations; a survey of Officers and Members to establish whether the roles and expectations set out in the Constitution are met; a comparison of parts of the Council's Constitution with those of other authorities; and, observation of a meeting of the Executive Programme Board to assess its working practices.
- 3.1.2 The Internal Audit Report made several recommendations which can be summarised as, revise the Protocol; convene a Member / Officer Working Group to contribute to the revision; launch a training programme to raise awareness of the revised Protocol; and ensure that the revised Protocol contains a full description of Members' role on the Council.
- 3.1.3 At its meeting in September 2019, the Standards Committee considered a draft revised Protocol and, in line with the recommendation in the BDO report, appointed a Working Group consisting of Members and Officers to consider and contribute to the draft. The Standards Committee Working Group met on 27 January 2020 to consider the report.
- 3.1.4 Members of the Standards Committee raised a number of practical issues based on their experience of the relationship between Members and Officers and considered whether the draft Protocol dealt with these satisfactorily. These included:
- 3.1.4.1 That Members should not 'ambush' officers at short notice and should make appointments were possible. The Group recognised that the work being undertaken in relation to other parts of the BDO report addressed this issue, specifically the re-launch of the Member Contact Centre.
- 3.1.4.2 That where possible, technology should be utilised to provide information to Members to reduce the impact on Officers. The Group recognised that this was also addressed to an extent by the work to re-launch of the Member Contact Centre.
- 3.1.4.3 That timescales should be established for Officers to respond to Members' requests for information. The Group suggested that this could be incorporated into the work being undertaken to re-launch the Customer Contact Centre.
- 3.1.4.4 That advice from officers should be available to all Members, regardless of which political group (if any) they belong to. The Group agreed that the draft Protocol clearly stated that advice should be available to all Members.

3.1.4.5 The Working Group agreed that the draft Protocol addresses the issues highlighted in the BDO report along with those issues which Members and Officers experience in the course of their usual working relationship. The Working Group did, however, form the view that addressing the matters referred to at paragraphs 3.1.4.1 to 3.1.4.3 above may assist in delivering the objects of the Protocol.

3.1.4.6 The Standards Committee, at its meeting on 29 June 2020, received the report of the Working Group. The Committee highlighted that action may only be taken against a Member where they are alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council under the provisions of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011. When such a complaint is made it must be dealt with in accordance with the *Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils* which are contained in the Constitution for the purpose of implementing those provisions of the Localism Act 2011. Case law in 2018 has made clear that it is not permissible to have a 'dual system' of considering allegations against Members by using an authority's grievance procedure and, should such a course of action be taken, it will not bind the Member concerned. Accordingly, full Council should note that action may only be taken against a Member in relation to any alleged breach of any revised Protocol if the allegation concerned would also be a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

3.1.4.7 The Standards Committee therefore resolved that:

"RESOLVED:

- (1) The work undertaken by the Member and Officer Working Group was noted.
- (2) Having considered the comments of the Working Group it was agreed, to recommend the Protocol to full Council for adoption into the Constitution.

3.1 Decision details

3.1.2 Members may decide not to approve the draft Member/Officer Relations Protocol for inclusion in the Council's constitution.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 This report does not have any direct resource implications.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 As stated in section 3 of this report, action may only be taken against a Member where they are alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council under the provisions of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011. When such a complaint is made it must be dealt with in accordance with the *Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils* which are contained in the Constitution for the purpose of implementing those provisions of the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.3.2 Case law in 2018 has made clear that it is not permissible to have a 'dual system' of considering allegations against Members by using an authority's grievance procedure and, should such a course of action be taken, it will not bind the Member concerned.
- 4.3.3 Accordingly, full Council should note that action may only be taken against a Member in relation to any alleged breach of any revised Protocol if the allegation concerned would also be a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report

4.5 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

- 4.5.1 There are none arising from this report.

4.6 Other Implications

- 4.6.1 The constitution will be incorporate the Member/Officer Protocol if approved.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Reports and minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee/working Group of September 2019 and June 2020
- 5.2 Internal Audit Report (BDO) December 2018.

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Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

1. Introduction

- 1.1** As a supplement to the Northampton Borough Council Code of Conduct for Councillors, this Protocol provides clarity in respect of Member / Officer relations.
- 1.2** Relations between Members and Officers can be complex and cover a wide variety of matters. This Protocol therefore gives guidance and explanation on the issues that most commonly arise and give cause for concern as a result of that arrangement. The principles set out in this Protocol will also apply to dealing with other similar issues which may arise from time to time and are not expressly covered.
- 1.3** This Protocol seeks to establish best practice and promote greater clarity and certainty. If any Member is unsure about any matter they should contact the relevant Chief Whip and/or the Chief Executive and/or the Monitoring Officer for appropriate advice and assistance. If any Officer is unsure about any matter, they should initially contact their Head of Service.

NB A separate Protocol on Planning can be found in Part 5 of this Constitution in respect of conduct on planning matters. There is also a Northampton Borough Council Employees' Code of Conduct, which can be found on the intranet.

2.0 Roles

2.1 Elected members

The role of members is complex, being set out in the Council's Constitution, including Article 2.3.1. Members have a number of rights and duties under the Constitution however, these can be summarised as:

- initiating, developing and directing policy;
- being involved in decision making;
- setting the Council's strategic direction;
- managing the Council at a strategic level;
- being democratically accountable to the electorate;
- dealing with case work on behalf of constituents; and,
- representing the Council on other bodies.

2.2 Officers

The role of Officers is also complex and varied including many specialist functions however, it can be summarised as follows:

- to provide professional advice needed by Members to develop policy and perform the Council's functions;
- to implement the Council's lawfully made decisions;

- to run the Council's services;
- make day to day managerial and operational decisions under the Council's Scheme of Delegations; and
- to provide information relating to the Council's Services and Policies.

2. General Member/Employment Issues

Key Issues

- 2.1 In order to ensure the business of the Council is transacted effectively, efficiently and lawfully, and with a view to ensuring that the Council is not brought into disrepute, the **key guiding principle** for Members and Officers is one of “**engendering mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness, transparency and treating everyone with respect**”.
- 2.2 **Officers must act in the best interests of the Council as a whole**, and must not give politically partisan advice. Anyone breaching this requirement could face disciplinary action. Advice given by Officers should:
- 2.2.1 be objective;
 - 2.2.2 be consistent;
 - 2.2.3 be based on professional judgment;
 - 2.2.4 be politically neutral; and,
 - 2.2.5 include all factors which are relevant to the issue concerned.
- 2.3 Political Group meetings and Executive Programme Board, while they perform an important part in the preliminaries to Council decision-making, are **not** formal decision-making bodies and, as such, are **not empowered, to make decisions** on behalf of the Council. Conclusions reached at such meetings do not, therefore, **rank as Council decisions** and **do not bind later meetings** at which decisions are to be **lawfully made**.
- 2.4 Officer support should be equally available to all political Groups but must **not** extend beyond providing information and advice in relation to **Council business**.
- 2.5 It is good practice for party political debates and decision-making at political Group meetings to take place **in the absence of Officers**, in order to avoid any suspicion of impropriety or misunderstanding.
- 2.6 Officers must respect the confidentiality of any discussions on formulation of policy with Members at which they were present and, when any information is disclosed to them at a group meeting, must not pass this on to any other group.
- 2.7 Any breach of this part of the Protocol by an Officer must be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive for consideration.

Legal and District Audit Considerations

- 2.8** Members of the Council do not, as elected Members, have any special immunity from civil or criminal wrongs involving fellow Members, Officers or members of the public. Members must abide by the Code of Conduct for Councillors and ensure they do not, for example, slander or libel another person.
- 2.9** Members must also not pressurise any employee to change their professional advice or opinion on any Council business matter given in accordance with paragraph 2.2 above or do anything that compromises, or which is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council. It is also essential that Members are clear about their roles and the roles of employees, so as to avoid getting inappropriately involved in, for example, the internal office management, discipline and/or other employment related issues, as the actions of a Member may be held to be the actions of the Council as an “employer”, giving rise to legal proceedings against the Council.

Standards Issues

- 2.10** Any member of the public (including employees) can complain to the Council’s Monitoring Officer in respect of any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors in accordance with the Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members’ Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils, and/or bring private civil litigation proceedings against an elected Member. Breach of this Protocol could amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct and lead to such a complaint. The External Auditor can also take legal action against an elected Member and/or the Council as a whole, for certain breaches of the law.

Public Relations Issues

- 2.11** The Council’s Communications Team is, subject to the direction of the Cabinet of the Council, responsible for dealing with the press and other media organisations on behalf of the Council. It is important, therefore, that all official communications relating to the Council (but not party political or private matters) are dealt with by the Communications Team, so as to ensure the proactive, effective and efficient management of the Council’s public image, relations and interface with the community. The Communications Team will take appropriate legal and other advice in relation to any such contact with the press or other media.

3. Specific Points on Member/Employee Relations

- 3.1** The relationship between Members and employees generally is characterised by **mutual trust, respect and courtesy**. These are **essential** for good local government and enhance local democracy.
- 3.2** Close personal familiarity between individual Members and employees can damage professional relationships and can prove embarrassing to other Members and employees. Therefore, close personal relationships between

Members and employees and situations which could give rise to suspicion and/or the appearance of improper conduct or behaviour should be avoided.

Chief Executive

- 3.3** The Chief Executive is an employee of the Council as a whole with overriding responsibility to the Council, and not to any party political group.

The Chief Executive must nevertheless work closely with the Administration to give it information, assistance, and advice. Subject to maintaining political neutrality the Chief Executive may develop a special relationship with the Administration leadership and will not without consent disclose to the other Groups any matters discussed with that leadership.

The political neutrality of the Chief Executive should be respected by Members and employees alike. The Chief Executive should not be asked to take any action which could prejudice that neutrality, or make it difficult to serve a different majority political party at some future time in the Council.

- 3.4** All Members of the Council have a right of access to the Chief Executive. Where a Member requires information, it will be provided if it is readily available, subject to any restrictions in the Council's Constitution or relevant legislation. The Chief Executive is free to give advice on a confidential basis about procedural matters to any Member. In doubtful cases, the Chief Executive is entitled to seek the instructions of the Leader or a Chair, Cabinet Member, the Cabinet or a Committee before responding to a request from a Member.

- 3.5** The following principles govern the relationship between the Chief Executive and Groups not comprising all or part of the Administration:

It is proper for the Chief Executive to develop a working relationship with such other Groups on the Council.

The Chief Executive is free to provide information and answer procedural inquiries to Members of any Group, and will not advise as to the policies which any Group should pursue.

Subject to the confidentiality required by paragraph 3.15 the Chief Executive will ensure that the Leadership of the Administration is aware of any factual information that they have provided to representatives of other Groups, unless it either be of a routine or trivial nature or to do so would be a breach of confidence or other statutory, formal or Guideline requirement.

Because the Chief Executive is an employee of the whole Council, they accordingly, will draw the attention of the Leader to any case where consideration should be given to affording information, consultation, or representation to the Minority Groups.

In applying these principles to any given situation, the Chief Executive will have regard to any statutory, Constitutional or procedural rules governing the rights of other Groups to information, consultation or representation.

- 3.6** If the Chief Executive attends a meeting of any Group, the leadership of the other Groups on the Council need not be informed. The Chief Executive will ensure that the part played in the proceedings is consistent with the political neutrality of his/her role and will not attend Group meetings at which there are persons present who are neither elected Members nor employees of the Council.

Other Employees

- 3.7** The foregoing principles apply similarly to all Heads of Service (and employees acting under their direction), all of whom shall act under the general direction, seeking advice of the Chief Executive as statutory Head of Paid Service where necessary.

- 3.8** To advance the requirement that all dealings between Members and employees are conducted with mutual trust, respect and courtesy, neither party should seek to take an unfair advantage of their position. In particular, Members should recognise and pay due regard to the Council's role as an employer in their dealings with employees, as inappropriate behaviour and conduct of Members could give rise to employment cases against the Council. In particular, it is quite proper for a Member to make written/oral representations about their [constituent] employee to the Head of Service, but the Member should avoid taking a proactive part to represent or in any other way advocate on behalf of any such employee in any disciplinary procedures.

- 3.9** In seeking advice and support, Members should have due regard to the seniority of the employees with whom they are dealing and recognise that those employees owe an overriding duty to the Council as a whole, via their respective line managers and the Chief Executive, and not to any individual Member. For this reason, Members should not give direct instructions to employees unless they are specifically authorised to do so by the Council's Constitution. If so authorised, instructions should, under normal circumstances, still be given to the relevant Head of Service and not to a less senior employee and should be clearly recorded in writing.

- 3.10** Members must not put inappropriate pressure on employees (in particular junior employees) and must ensure that all communication between them (including written communication) does not bring the Council into disrepute, or lead to the breakdown of mutual trust, respect and courtesy in Member/employee relations.

Equality Issues

- 3.11** The Council has statutory duties in respect of equality issues and, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Councillors, Members must also promote equality and not discriminate against others. Members and employees

should not, therefore, by their behaviour or speech act discriminatorily with regard to a person's gender, race, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Employee Conduct or Capability Issues

- 3.12** Members should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an employee (or of employees collectively) at meetings held in public or before the press, as employees have no means of responding publicly. If any Member feels as that they have not been treated with the proper mutual trust, respect or courtesy or has any concern about the conduct or capability of an employee, they should raise the matter privately with the relevant employee and, if necessary, the employee's Head of Service. Any concerns with regard to a Head of Service should be discussed privately with the Chief Executive and/or the Leader of the relevant Political Group.

Political Groups

- 3.13** Members of the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Regulatory Committees shall at all times respect the political impartiality of employees, and must not expect or encourage them to give a political view on any matter.

- 3.14** Employees may properly be called upon to support and contribute to the deliberations of Groups but they must at all times remain politically neutral. This applies in particular to politically restricted posts, where employees are governed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. All employees must, in their dealings with Groups and individual Members, treat them in a fair and even-handed manner.

- 3.15** Any request for advice given to a Group or Member will be treated with the strictest of confidence by the employees concerned, and will not be accessible to any other Group(s). Factual information upon which any advice is based will, if requested, be available to all Groups.

- 3.16** When attendance is requested for Group meetings:

3.16.1 the request to attend a Group meeting must normally be made through the Chief Executive, unless previously agreed by them;

3.16.2 such a request can only be made in relation to **Council business**; and

3.16.3 employees will:

- (i) provide relevant factual and professional advice and assistance;
- (ii) normally leave during the deliberations of the Group on the issue;
- (iii) respect the confidentiality of any Group decision at which they are present; and
- (iv) not champion, defend, action or spend any resources of the Council, or be held responsible for actioning in any way whatsoever the decisions of the Group(s), unless and until such decisions have become the formal

decisions of the Council, i.e. until the person or body with responsibility for making such decisions under the Constitution has done so in accordance with all legal and procedural formalities.

4. Specific Points on Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

- 4.1** When considering calling employees to give evidence to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may call the Chief Executive, and/or senior Officers to give evidence to the Committee as prescribed by paragraph 13.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
- 4.2** When asking employees to give evidence before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, questions should be confined, so far as possible, to questions of fact and explanation of any professional opinion relating to policies and decisions. Employees must respond to questions from Members in an open, constructive and helpful manner, and must not mislead or be economical with the truth.
- 4.3** Where they consider it appropriate, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may ask Heads of Service to explain any advice given by them to the Cabinet or its members. For the avoidance of doubt, any private or confidential matter must be dealt with in a private or confidential manner.

Unacceptable or Inappropriate Behaviour:

- 4.4** The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall ensure that members of the Cabinet and employees are not questioned (whether through the nature, tone or language used), in such a manner as could be considered by a reasonable person to be hostile, offensive, derogatory, harassing, bullying, victimising, discriminatory or otherwise unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour by a Member. Equally, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has no jurisdiction to deal with matters, which are of a disciplinary nature for the relevant Group (in respect of Members) or the relevant Head of Service/Chief Executive (in respect of employees).

NB Note on Use of Local Authority Resources

- 4.5** The only basis on which the Council can lawfully provide support services to Members (e.g. computers, or other IT software, stationery, typing, printing, photocopying, transport etc.) is to assist them in the effective and efficient discharge of their duties and role as Members of the Council. Such support services must, therefore be only used for Council business. The same should not be used for, or in connection with, party political or campaigning activities, or for private purposes.

5. Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

- 5.1** Examples of behaviours which are acceptable

Officers and Members treating one another with mutual respect

Officers and Members recognising and respecting each other's roles

Members understanding that Officers give advice based on their professional qualifications and experience

Use of courteous language in all dealings

Prompt responses by Officers to enquiries by Members

5.2 The following are examples of behaviours which are unacceptable:

Officers failing to respond to enquiries by members

Expression of political opinions by Officers, particularly in relation to Council policy or matters being considered by Members

Attempts by Members to persuade Officers to change their professional advice

Members becoming involved in day to day staff management issues

Use of inappropriate or offensive language by Members or Officers toward one another

Officers seeking to persuade Members to make a particular decision in relation to a matter

Officers failing to give accurate or comprehensive advice to Members

Members seeking to bypass legal or Constitutional requirements

Appendices:
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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20 July 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Borough Secretary

Report Title	Changes to Committee Places
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1. Purpose

1.1 Council is asked to approve changes to the membership of the Audit Committee listed below.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Councillor Parekh replaces Councillor Hibbert on the Audit Committee.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1 The Conservative Group wishes to make changes to Committee places on the Audit Committee.

3.2 At the annual Council meeting on 21 May 2020, Councillor Hibbert was appointed by the Conservative Group to the Audit Committee. The Conservative Group would like to change membership of the Audit Committee as detailed in section 2.1 of this report.

3.3 Proportionality has not been affected.

3.4 Appointments to all other Committees agreed by Council on the 21 May 2020 remain unchanged.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 None

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 None

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no legal implications

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no equality implications

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 None

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

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