

NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday, 27 January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Ashraf (Chair); Councillors Ansell, Birch, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Flavell, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, Joyce, Lane, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Russell, Smith and Stone
In attendance: Mr R Walden (Acting Town Clerk); Mr G Candler and Mr L Gould. Mrs M Goodman, Ms M McInnes and Ms T Tiff (Northampton Borough Council); Dr L Sambrook-Smith (NorthantsCALC)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Cali, King, M Markham and Meredith.

The Acting Town Clerk reported that Mr C Chunga had been disqualified as a Borough Councillor for Brookside Ward due to non-attendance at meetings for over six months. He was accordingly no longer an appointed Town Councillor and the seat could remain vacant until the next ordinary elections on 6th May 2021.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 December 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Councillor Hallam proposed and Councillor Hill seconded that Councillor Hibbert be appointed to fill the vacancy for a member of the Executive Committee.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hibbert be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee.

5. APPOINTMENT OF NEW TOWN CLERK

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Birch proposed the recommendations of the Appointment Panel on pages 5 and 6 of the agenda that Marion Goodman be appointed Town Clerk to the Town Council with effect from 1st April 2021. She highlighted the error in recommendation one, Marion is the Interim Assistant Chief Executive and not the Acting Chief Executive.

Councillor Birch shared that she was delighted to welcome Marion as the first Town Clerk of the Northampton Town Council, which was now the largest town council in the country. She congratulated Marion and explained that the position had gained a lot of interest, and the rigorous assessment process had taken place over a two-day period, and the Panel's decision to recommend Marion as the Town Clerk was unanimous.

Councillor Marriott seconded the motion and echoed the comments of Cllr Birch, adding that the interview panel had received references for Marion which were exceptional.

Councillor Hallam shared that the appointment of Marion as the Town Clerk was excellent

news and that councillors had worked with Marion for many years and she was always a diligent officer. He looked forward to working with Marion in her new role, with the exciting challenges and opportunities it will bring.

Council voted on the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- That Marion Goodman, currently Interim Assistant Chief Executive and Director for Customers and Communities with Northampton Borough Council be appointed Town Clerk to the Town Council with effect from 1 April 2021
- That, to enable the Council at its Annual Meeting to be held on 17 May 2021 to meet the criteria for having a CiLCA qualified Clerk in post in order to meet the statutory criteria to adopt the General Power of Competence, Marion be initially employed in the position of Town Clerk (Designate) to work alongside the Acting Town Clerk but that she be appointed to the substantive role of Town Clerk immediately following that meeting.

The Chair then congratulated the new Town Clerk on behalf of all the Members of the Northampton Town Council and wished her every success in her new role. The Chair then invited Marion to share a few words.

The new Town Clerk thanked everyone for their kind words and expressed that it had been a privilege and an honour to serve as an officer for the Borough Council, and she was appreciative of the opportunity to continue to serve Councillors and the people of Northampton as Town Clerk. She was looking forward to building effective relationships with all the other Town and Parish Councils within the area and businesses, as well as helping Northampton Town Council deliver on all its aspirations for the town.

6. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Marriott seconded that the Council receive the reports and recommendations of the Executive Committee meetings held on 5th January and 19th January together with a supplemental report of the Acting Town Clerk and that the recommendations therein be adopted.

a) Transfer of Property and Services

Council debated the recommendations at Minute 4 (a) of the Committee's report.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Ansell, Birch, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Flavell, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Hill, Joyce, Lane, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Russell, Smith and Stone (19).

The Chair declared the recommendations to be carried.

RESOLVED:

- i) That it be agreed in principle, subject to the concurrence of the Shadow West Northants Council, to the transfer on 1st April of those properties and services set out in paragraph (b) of the report of the Acting Town Clerk (including a long lease of the historic part of the Guildhall)* and, subject to the approval of the draft budget for

2021/22, further reports on the financial and staffing implications of these transfers be presented to the Executive Committee;

- ii) That a possible funded transfer of the further services set out in paragraph (c) of the report** on 1st April 2021 be explored with the Shadow West Northants Council; and
- iii) That, in the event of the Borough/ West Northants Councils agreeing to the transfer of property and services outlined above but it not proving possible to conclude the formalities of any of those transfers by 1st April, 2021, the Town Clerk be authorised to conclude a Service Level Agreement to enable those services to be continued to be delivered under existing arrangements until such time in 2021 when the formalities of transfer can be completed.

*(Notes: 1. * This refers to Markets, Events and Entertainments, Festive Lighting, Street Furniture, Hanging baskets and Planting Displays, Town Twinning, Community Grants, and Town Centre Management Activities.*

*2. ** This refers to Local Open Spaces and Play Ares (but excluding premier parks and land held under the Housing Revenue Account), Community Centres, War Memorial and statues, Council representatives on outside bodies and charities, Neighbourhood Wardens, Park Rangers.)*

b) Draft Budget and Precept 2021/22

The Council debated the recommendations at Minute 5 on pages 13 and 14 as well as the draft budget in the Appendix on page 15 and the supplemental report of the Acting Town Clerk.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the motion: Councillors Ashraf, Birch, Duffy, Haque, Lane, B Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Russell, Smith and Stone (11)

There voted against the motion: Councillors Ansell, G Eales, T Eales, Flavell, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill and Joyce (*).

The Chair declared the recommendations to be carried.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the draft budget in the sum of £1,775, be approved and a precept on the Borough Council/West Northamptonshire Council for 2021/22 in that sum;
- ii) That, as a matter of priority, the new Town Clerk undertakes detailed reviews of all services which are transferred to enable the Council to consider any possible modifications and enhancements to those services;
- iii) That the Town Clerk be authorised to recruit and appoint the following support staff to commence duties on 1st April 2021: Administration Officer (full time) Administration Assistant (part time) Finance Officer (part time); and
- iv) That no expenditure be committed on the items in the budget marked with an * until the relevant committee has approved full details of how these contingency sums will be expended.

c) Reception of the Report

RESOLVED: That, subject to the foregoing, the reports of the Executive Committee held on 5th and 19th January 2021 be received and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

Councillor Birch proposed and Councillor Marriott seconded that the next meeting should be held on Monday 1st March 2021 at 6:00pm.

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Northampton Town Council would be held on Monday 1st March 2021 at 6:00pm.

The meeting concluded at 18:55