

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 2 June 2014

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 2 JUNE 2014 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 28th April 2014.

3. APOLOGIES.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

(Copy herewith)

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

(Copy herewith)

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Capstick to make a statement on 'Derelict Sites'.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor Eales to propose and Councillor Capstick to second that:

“This Council notes that Cllr Wire seconded a motion on 12th September 2011 supporting the joining up of St. James Mill Road and the road end in St. James Retail Park.

This Council notes how long this policy has been in existence, disappointingly without resolution.

Linking up these particular roads would ease congestion on Peters Way and the roads in St. James and Far Cotton, which also means less pollution. It would increase the economic viability of the southwest district and particularly the Waterside Enterprise Zone and the new Rail Station. Also the major problem of heavy traffic on Saints and Cobblers match days would be much improved.

This Council asks the Cabinet to continue in putting pressure, by whatever means they see as necessary, on the Secretary of State for Transport and Network Rail to have the rail line dismantled as soon as realistically possible.

However, if this course of action proves problematic (as suggested in the Northampton Chronicle & Echo 15/5/2014), then an alternative option, such as a bridge, should be considered and implemented at the earliest opportunity.”

ii) Councillor Stone to propose and Councillor N Choudary to second that:

“This Council notes the Sekhemka statue is due to go to auction on 10th July.

This also notes Arts Council England (ACE) has warned that the sale could jeopardise Northampton Museum’s Accreditation status.

This Council further notes that the Museums Association’s (MA) ethics committee has urged Northampton Borough Council to rethink its sale of an ancient Egyptian statue.

This Council ask the Cabinet one last time to reconsider selling of the statue, so it can be enjoyed by the people of Northampton and visitors to the town.”

iii) Councillor Palethorpe to propose and Councillor Stone to second that:

“This Council notes the ‘People’s March for the NHS’ starts in Jarrow on 16th August and finishes in London 6th September.

This march is highlighting the detrimental impact Government policies are having on the NHS.

This Council further notes it follows the spirit of the Jarrow Crusade in October 1936, which saw 207 people troop to London to highlight mass unemployment in Britain

It will be going through 23 major towns and cities and will arrive in Northampton on September 2nd.

This Council supports the NHS. It is one of our most important institutions.

This Council is pleased the People's March for the NHS is passing through our town and we will welcome them to Northampton when they arrive.”

iv) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor Glynane to second:

“Rogue landlords cause increasing problems for residents on Northampton. This administration has introduced new licensing rules recently. However, the LGA say “the current system limits Council’s ability to stamp out poor quality and dangerous property conditions” and as such, these new rules are likely to have a limited effect.

This Council therefore resolves to write to local Members of Parliament, asking them to back the LGA campaign to lobby Government to toughen powers of local Councils to tackle rogue landlords effectively”.

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

The Guildhall
Northampton

D. Kennedy Chief Executive

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 at 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, faxed or 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

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, 28 April 2014 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Marriott, Caswell, Ansell, Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Bottwood, Capstick, I. Choudary, N Choudary, Duncan, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Glynane, Golby, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, King, Lane, Larratt, Lynch, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Mason, Mennell, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Stone and Strachan

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hadland declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Cabinet Member Reports and Motion x) as former Member of WNDC and a current Member of the WNDC Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Capstick declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Cabinet Member Reports and Motion x) as former Member of WNDC and a current Member of the WNDC Audit and Risk Committee.

Councillor Strachan declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Motion vi) as a member of credit Union.

Councillor King declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Motion vi) as a member of credit Union.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th March 2014 and the minutes of the adjourned meeting of the 24th February 2014 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Davies, Eales, Gowen, Palethorpe, Wire, Subbarayan, Yates and Conroy.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that during the last year he had spent time with his Chaplain and explained that he had been made aware that the Chaplain and congregation had been collecting 5 pence pieces which had been used to put towards the purchase of rehydrating salts for children affected by, and dying from, diarrhoea and dehydration in parts of the world where treatment was insufficient. The Mayor noted that in the past year there had been numerous charitable activities money raised for good

causes around the town and further afield.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mrs Sibley addressed Council and stated that she thought it improper for dogs to be allowed to be kept in Council owned flats. She noted that a number of residents had let their dogs out and had subsequently not cleared up after them, which was against the law and asked the Council to address the issue.

Mr Leach addressed Council and stated that the recent chalk event on Abington Street had demonstrated that there was major opposition to de-pedestrianisation.

Mr Nichols addressed Council and noted that there was a need to make the town centre more desirable to tourists and residents and urged that the Council re-install the fire baskets that were formally in place at the top of Abington Street, the Central Library be cleaned up and empty shops made to look more aesthetically appealing.

Mr Townsend addressed Council and commented that he was concerned about a potential increase in road accidents once Abington Street was opened. He noted that it was a Health and Safety concern and suggested that it would result in people shopping elsewhere and driving tourism out of the Town Centre.

Mr Wishart addressed Council and urged the Administration to reconsider de-pedestrianising Abington Street as it would impinge on the accessibility for disabled people, wheelchair users and children and commented that the findings of the recent study undertaken by the University of Northampton had found that the opening up of the street to traffic would have no positive significant economic or environmental impact on the Town Centre.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 8 questions had been received from members of the public and Councillors and that the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions and answers given were as tabled (included in an updated agenda on the website) unless where stated, supplementary questions were asked – details below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 2, Councillor Hallam explained that the Council had no jurisdiction over fly tipping in private alleyways but that the Council worked with residents to resolve such issues.

Councillor Mason asked a supplementary question as to how the mistake of the Guildhall Office had ceased supplying Fair Trade products, to which Councillor Mackintosh declined to comment.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 8, Councillor Mackintosh commented that the de-pedestrianisation of Abington Street would bring life and vitality back to the Town Centre to ensure that it is prosperous in the future.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

At this point, each of the Cabinet Members made a presentation of their respective portfolios that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Mackintosh submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that the free parking had made a positive difference to the number of visitors to the town. It was noted that 100 new Council houses were going to be built and explained that over the Easter weekend, work had begun on the demolition of the Greyfriars building with a bridge connecting to the Grosvenor Centre having been removed. It was further reported that the restoration project of Delapre Abbey was underway and that the Administration were committed to the protecting heritage assets in Northampton.

In response to a question, Councillor Mackintosh confirmed that the removal of the Virgin Media cables would not result in extra cost and that the relocated site of the Francis Crick statue would be revealed at a later date. With regards to the old Greyfriars building and future developments, Councillor Mackintosh noted that there was continuing work with the Grosvenor Centre but that they were awaiting the outcome of the Rushden Lakes hearing before any announcements would be made. Responding to a further question, it was noted that some progress had been made with regards to the domestic violence and that the administration recognised the terrible situation faced by victims of domestic violence.

Councillor Markham submitted her Cabinet Member report and explained that Cabinet had recently agreed to the creation of an ALMO Shadow Board and noted that Cabinet had also agreed to the additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation. She explained that the Decent Homes Programme was on-going and that whilst there had been a number of issues, these were being dealt with and were inevitable due to the size of the programme. In response to a question asked, Councillor Markham commented that a review board comprised of Councillors was not necessary as a Service Improvement Board had already been established. In response to further questions, it was confirmed that there were currently 20 people in Bed and Breakfasts, 3 of whom had made themselves intentionally homeless, three-quarters of the budget for Discretionary Housing Payments had been spent, but that there had been no appeals in the past 3 months. Responding to a further question, Councillor Markham clarified that more residents were being offered housing affordable to their individual circumstances, so that those who could afford to pay, would do so. With regards to a question asked relating to HIMOs, she commented that she envisaged that there would be few problems collecting the licence fee.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Members report and noted that the free parking scheme had been well received and that there had been an overall increase in usage which was a success. It was noted that hundreds of jobs had been created within the Enterprise Zone which largely as a function of the rate relief scheme which had been implemented in the zone. In response to a question asked, it was reported that there was no fool proof measure to prevent members of the public from interfering with the Market Place fountain.

Councillor Eldred submitted a report and commented elaborated thereon. In response to a question asked, Councillor Eldred reiterated that there were currently no plans to sell of any further artefacts, but that it may be a consideration in the future.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Members report and noted that the Council were continuing to work with Anglian Water to restore the water levels at Bradlaugh Fields. In response to a question, Councillor Hallam commented that he would be happy to attend a meeting of the Racecourse Park Management Committee and further noted that 2 Park Managers were being recruited which would help deal with anti-social behaviour in parks and that multi agency working was underway to deal with those issues. Councillor Hallam confirmed that he would be helping to assist all parks in Northampton as part of Northampton in Bloom. In response to a further question raised, it was noted that the budget for tree cutting in the Eastern District would be confirmed and that the Cabinet Member would become more involved in resolving the concerns expressed by the Ward Member. Responding to a further question, Councillor Hallam asked that he be invited to the 'Friends of Thornton Park' meeting which would allow for him to develop contacts and deal with concerns raised.

Councillor Bottwood submitted his Cabinet Members report and elaborated thereon. In response to a question asked, he commented that there were no performance figures that he was particularly concerned about and should there be in the future, that he would discuss his concerns with Cabinet Members and relevant Officers.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Stone commented that recent events, including the 1 Billion Rising for Justice, International Women's Day, Mothering Sunday and the upcoming election should be a reminder of important role that women in society play. She noted that only one third of elected Councillors were women and stated that there was a democratic deficit which continued to affect women. She noted that changes brought to Welfare Reform had massively affected women and had resulted in women having lost out both in their employment and in the home and stated that the impact of this had resulted in the number of children living in poverty in Northampton increasing. She stated that it was a huge issue and that it was within the gift of the local authority to empower and support women.

Councillor Mackintosh commented that the administration had introduced a number of women-centric events, which included the women's forum and that support had been given to events that supported women's issue including the 1 Billion Rising for Justice and International Women's Day.

Councillor Stone commented that it was the Labour Group who had asked for the Women's Forum to be re-instated and that the administration had voted against a recent motion from Labour requesting people be paid the living wage.

9. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that sought the approval of the Calendar of Meetings for 2014/15.

Councillor Markham seconded adoption of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the calendar of meetings for 2014/15 be approved.

10. PINEHAM BUSINESS PARK

Councillor Hadland submitted a report that sought to devolve the Council's decision making authority as local planning authority to South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) with regards to the cross boundary outline planning application for the development Pineham Business Park.

Councillor Mackintosh seconded adoption of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's decision making authority as local planning authority be devolved to South Northamptonshire Council as set out in the report.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

- i) Councillor Eldred proposed and Councillor Larratt seconded that:

“This Council recognises the importance of the town's three sports clubs and celebrates having cricket, football and rugby teams in Northampton.

Despite years of delays under the Liberal Democrats, this Council is pleased that, under Conservative control, we have now seen developments agreed at Sixfields Stadium, Franklin's Gardens and the County Ground.

This Council welcomes the positive attitude demonstrated by all the clubs and their help in promoting the town and wishes them every success for the coming seasons”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

- ii) Councillor Hadland proposed and Councillor Nunn seconded:

“This Council welcomes the announcement by leading financial company Experian that Northampton is the number one place in Britain to do business.

The company released its findings in March outlining the four key areas it measured with the number of start-ups, rate of insolvencies, level of financial health and business turnover.

Council recognises that Northampton achieved top marks for turnover, start-up and insolvency rates and dropped just one point for financial strength.

Council welcomes this report which recognises the important partnerships with

leading businesses, public authorities and the local enterprise partnerships as part of the Northampton Alive programme”.

Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor Mason seconded an amendment:

That the last paragraph be removed and amended, so that the motion now reads:

“This Council welcomes the announcement by leading financial company Experian that Northampton is the number one place in Britain to do business.

The company released its findings in March outlining the four key areas it measured with the number of start-ups, rate of insolvencies, level of financial health and business turnover.

Council recognises that Northampton achieved top marks for turnover, start-up and insolvency rates and dropped just one point for financial strength.

However, this Council is concerned that being number one for business as quoted by Experian relies on

- i) Under-employment in the town where employees work on zero hour contracts.
- ii) The proliferation of jobs in warehousing and low wage local economy
- iii) Employment for many workers being subsidised by the state where employers paying less than the minimum wage are forcing workers to apply for benefits.”

Council debated the amended motion.

Upon a vote the amended motion was lost.

Council debated the original motion.

Upon a vote the original motion was carried.

- iii) Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor Oldham seconded that:

“This Council recognises the benefit of Tenant Engagement which, which has been absent for many years.

This Council has benefited since opening the doors and introducing not only the Tenant Panel but also the additional six service improvement panels.

This Council is committed to continue to engage with tenants and recognises the added value it brings to the authority”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iv) Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor Bottwood seconded:

“Council congratulates this administration’s commitment to the creation of new council houses in Northampton, and welcomes the announcement that this Conservative administration will be building 100 new council houses at Dallington Grange.

This project will bring the first significant development of new council homes in our town for two decades, and as one of the largest in the country, will put Northampton at the forefront of the creation of new council homes.

Council also welcomes the Government’s efforts to address the national housing shortage, increase the supply of affordable housing and to help people get on the housing ladder”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

v) Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Glynane seconded :

The Conservative election manifesto of 2011 made several pledges, including “Northampton needs a Council that listens and delivers what the people want; not one that is out of touch.”

Council therefore calls upon the administration to deliver on this manifesto promise as a priority.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

vi) Councillor Eldred proposed and Councillor King seconded:

‘Council welcomes the opening of the new Northamptonshire Credit Union access and information point at the Guildhall One Stop Shop. The new access point will make it easier for people in Northampton to use the services offered by the Credit Union and help those experiencing financial difficulties.

‘Council supports the work of Northamptonshire Credit Union and their efforts to help those experiencing financial hardship, and to give people alternatives to loan sharks and pay day lenders.’

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

vii) Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor King seconded:

'Preventing abuse and domestic violence is a high priority for this Administration.

'Council notes that the Borough Council is working closely with relevant organisations in Northampton that deal with issues around abuse and domestic violence, and that officers from the Borough Council are working proactively with Northamptonshire County Council on this issue.

'Council supports the work of these associated organisations, and notes that the Administration will continue to monitor this situation to see what further support can be given to help victims of domestic violence.'

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

viii) Councillor Mason proposed and Councillor N Choudary seconded:

This council is committed to ensuring that all people can live free of fear of violence at home, and is totally opposed to the domestic violence that led to women in our county making 12,000 complaints to the police in the last year for which figures are available

This council is aware of the difficulties that agencies working with women who are victims of domestic abuse are facing.

This council recognises that this is a safeguarding issue and resolves to work with the relevant agencies in the town to find local solutions to these difficulties.

This council further resolves to work with county wide agencies to develop a strategy for support that meets the needs of the women and the children at risk of abuse and who are victims of abuse.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

ix) Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor N Choudary seconded:

This Council notes the proliferation and concentration of betting shops is contributing to community decline, especially the decline in valued community assets like pubs. England's poorest spend £13bn a year on the gambling machines in these shops according to a study published by the Campaign for Fairer Gambling. The ongoing spread of betting shops has also been linked to gambling addiction and crime.

This council also notes that gambling machines in the Betting Shops and in pubs is adding to the vulnerability of our local communities.

This Council therefore resolve to write a letter to Central Government asking them to create a separate planning use class for betting shops so that local authorities have new powers to address the problem.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

x) Councillor Capstick proposed and Councillor Stone seconded:

“This Council notes that the WNDC finished on 31st March. This Council believes ongoing WNDC projects must still be monitored to ensure their completion. This Council resolves to establish a working party to monitor the progress on the completion of the WNDC legacy projects. The working party would receive bi-monthly reports of progress and in turn the Working Party reports back to Full Council”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

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

None.

The meeting concluded at 9.36pm

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 1

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth

Freedom of information requests from members of the public (even excluding those from other political parties) have seen an enormous jump during this administration. Figures show 220 FOI requests in the last full year of the last administration, and 388 FOI requests last year.

Does the significant increase demonstrate that this is not a transparent and open Council?

Response

The Council complies fully with the Freedom of Information legislation and welcomes any requests from members of the public.

**Cllr Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 2

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth

Can the leader of the Council explain why a report from a reputable university is less important than no report at all from this Council?

Response

It is unclear what Cllr Beardsworth is talking about. No change there.

**Cllr Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 3

Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth

Whose decision was it to reopen Abington Street to traffic? The leader, the cabinet or the whole Conservative group?

Response

As Cllr Beardsworth is aware, the Cabinet made decisions on this at the meetings in July 2013 and December 2013 and they were part of the Budget meetings of Full Council. These decisions were based on a manifesto commitment on which all of the Conservative group was elected. Unlike the Liberal Democrats, we believe manifesto commitments are important.

**Cllr Mackintosh
Leader of the Council**

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 4

Question to Councillor Eldred from Councillor Glynane

It has been 18 months since the administration's ill considered attempt to sell the Sekemka statue, which subsequently embroiled the Council in a legal battle.

How much money was spent in the legal negotiations with the Marquis of Northampton regarding the specifics of the sale.

Response

The Administration is confident that the Council will achieve a very substantial capital receipt as a result of the sale of Sekhemka which will give us a fantastic opportunity to improve our museum service for the benefit of Northampton residents.

To get us to this position we have had to enter into commercial negotiations with Lord Northampton and in doing so, as one would expect, we have incurred legal costs of about £10,000.

**Cllr Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 5

Question to Councillor Eldred from Councillor Glynane

Can the administration assure this Council that the loss of the Sekemka statue will not risk the accreditation of the museum, and potentially cost it its status and a significant portion of its ongoing funding?

Response

During the last 18 months we have been proceeding in accordance with advice received from Arts Council England (ACE) and the Museums Association. We are currently preparing a detailed report concerning the circumstances of the sale which will be considered by the ACE accreditation panel. We expect to retain our status as an accredited museum.

**Cllr Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 6

Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Conroy

What is going to be the cost to the tax payer of re-positioning the virgin media cables that are running down the portion of Abington Street you're opening back to traffic?

Response

These costs are included in the overall budget for the re-opening of the middle section of Abington Street to traffic.

Cllr Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

Question for Full Council Monday 2nd June 2014

Question 7

Question to Councillor Hadland from Councillor Conroy

Has the Council made a final decision on where the Crick statue will be situated if Abington Street is reopened to traffic? If not, when is this decision expected?

Response

The statue will be located on Abington Street outside of Marks and Spencer. Work to move the statue is already underway.

Cllr Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

Agenda Item 7



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

On 18th April I was honoured to attend a service to remember Australian servicemen buried in Northampton as part of the commemorations for ANZAC Day. The Service paid respects to nine servicemen who died of wounds and disease in local military hospitals in Northampton during the First World War. As part of our commitment to the Armed Forces, it is important we recognise the bravery of our Armed Forces and our Commonwealth Allies like Australia and New Zealand.

The exciting line up of spring and summer events in and around the town is now underway. On 7th May I was privileged to attend the closing ceremony of Stage One of the first-ever Women's Cycling Tour in Northampton Town Centre. It was a great event to have in Northampton and it was pleased to see so many people lining the streets to cheer on the race.

The ever popular Delapre Beer Festival, which was saved from cancellation by this Administration, took place at the end of May. This year it was a pleasure to see the Phipps NBC brewery take part in the festival after recently returning to Northampton after four decades.

The regeneration of our town has been ongoing with the first demolition work at the old Greyfriars Bus Station taking place over the Easter Weekend. This was done with minimal disruption, and demolition is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Work has also begun on the £400,000 repairs at Delapre Abbey. The work is part of our commitment to this valuable heritage asset, and our pledge to bring it back into wider use to attract more visitors to the town and for the benefit of residents.

On 1st May I attended a ceremony with Local Growth Minister, Kris Hopkins MP to mark the beginning of Cosworth Engineering's new £12 million Advanced Manufacturing Centre. This will be the first facility of its kind in the UK and we have worked hard to ensure that it will be located here in Northampton. It is another vote of confidence in what we are achieving here in Northampton, and will help create up to 70 new jobs and cement Cosworth's future in our town.

In May the plans for Project Angel were approved by the Planning Committee. The development will transform derelict land in the heart of Northampton into a new headquarters and office building, saving tax payers millions of pounds and generating a massive cash injection to the Town Centre. The site is within the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone and forms an important part of our Town Centre improvement strategy.

The new student accommodation at nearby St John's will be in full occupation later this summer, bringing more than 400 students right into the heart of our town. Within a few years, the University of Northampton will consolidate its campuses at the former Nunn Mills power station site, bringing thousands more students right to traders' doorsteps.

When this Administration took control of the council in 2011, Northampton Borough Council had been rated as the second worst authority outside of London for bringing homes up to the decent standard, and tenants were suffering as a result. Northampton Borough Council has historically been a bad landlord, which is why we have restructured the Housing Department and have set up Northampton Partnership Homes to give tenants the landlord they deserve rather than what they have had to put up with in the past. This has been a key policy for this Administration, and I am pleased that from January next year Northampton Partnership Homes will take control of 12,000 council homes, and we have taken a major step towards improving the lives of our tenants.

Community Safety

Northampton has seen significant reductions in crime during 2013/14, ending the year with an overall reduction in crime of 17.1%. All key crime types have fallen, with Serious Acquisitive Crime achieving an overall reduction of 27.7%. This was primarily due to low levels of vehicle crime and undercutting the high volume of dwelling burglaries last winter. Nationally Northampton has had the 6th greatest reduction of all Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) for this period. Anti-Social Behaviour has seen a mixed performance with a 17.1% reduction in criminal damage but a 1.5% increase in reported anti-social behaviour incidents. Reductions in violent crime have continued to see a reduction of 17.4% for the year. All but one month of the year had fewer violent crimes than the equivalent month in 2012/13.

Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council



Cabinet Member Report for Housing

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

Rent Collection and Arrears

While 2013/14 presented a number of challenges for rent collection, including significant changes in housing benefit, we have increased our rent collection rate to 99.9%. This represents the lowest level of current tenants rent arrears in more than 10 years.

ALMO

On 12th May we announced that the name of the new Arms-Length Management Organisation that will take on the management of the Borough Council's housing stock will be Northampton Partnership Homes.

In January 2015 Northampton Partnership Homes will become responsible for the management of over 12,000 council homes, and will be a new start for tenants, delivering a financially sustainable way to update the Council's housing stock and provide local people with decent homes and improvements in service. We want our tenants to receive a higher level of service and to have better homes in the future, and we believe Northampton Partnership Homes is the best way to make that happen.

This Administration is dedicated to improving standards for both private and council tenants, and through projects such as this, the building of 100 new council homes and the introduction of improved monitoring of Houses of Multiple Occupation, we are making the improvements that tenants in Northampton deserve.

Community Wellbeing Services

Northampton County Council, Nene CCG and Corby CCG are working together to tender community wellbeing services. This will replace funding currently paid to a range of organisations as part of the "Prevention and Demand Management" grant and various health funding streams, but the commissioners are now looking for services to be more integrated, and with a greater focus on the overall wellbeing of individuals. The contract will be awarded as a single package for Northampton.

We have been in discussions with many local partner agencies, and have been asked by some to take the lead in bringing together a partnership to deliver a bid. We have agreed to take the lead on this, because we believe that it is in the interests of the local community for services to be delivered locally, by teams that understand our communities. There will of course be other bidders, and even if we are successful it does not mean that all existing services will continue as they are. We will need to work with partners to reshape services so they deliver really good services locally with limited resources, and with local communities to understand how we can better understand their needs. We will make resources available to ensure we are able to meet the challenging timescales required.

Councillor Mary Markham
Cabinet Member for Housing



Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

Work has started on a £400,000 project to carry out urgent repairs to the roof of Delapre Abbey. The project is being jointly funded by the Borough Council and English Heritage, and is part of the multi-million pound restoration of the Abbey. A £200,000 grant has been awarded from English Heritage's Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes Scheme.

English Heritage makes this funding available for conserving and restoring the country's most significant historic assets. The Borough Council is also investing £200,000 in the project to preserve the unique building. Building work to repair to roof of the main building has begun, and is essential to prevent leaks into the building that has caused damage to the interior of the Abbey.

At the same time there are also urgent structural repairs to the north wing of the building. It has always been a priority of this Administration to bring Delapre Abbey into greater use and protect it for future generations, and this work is a major step to achieving that goal.

On 1st May Local Growth Minister, Kris Hopkins visited Cosworth Engineering for the ceremony to mark the start of construction on its new £12 million Advanced Manufacturing Centre.

The new Cosworth facility, the first of its kind in the UK, will manufacture components and assemble some of the world's most advanced engines to global automotive manufacturers.

The new state-of-the-art 38,000ft² facility represents the next phase in a period of growth and development for Cosworth with support and backing from the Borough Council, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The project is due to create round 70 new jobs and apprenticeships in Northampton's Enterprise Zone.

Last year the Borough Council, in partnership with the Northampton Inter-Faith Forum, looked at the need for places to meet and worship in our town. The study looked at existing neighbourhoods as well as how the Borough Council should plan new communities and developments to ensure people had the facilities they needed. The study has been nominated for top honours in the 'Leading the way in Planning for Community Award' at the RTPi Awards for Planning Excellence 2014, which will be held on 23rd June.

Over the Easter weekend the first demolition work began at the old Greyfriars Bus Station. During the course of the weekend the two bridges linking the Grosvenor Centre and Greyfriars were removed with minimal disruption to the public. Demolition of the building is due to be completed by the end of 2014.

The Borough Council's Planning Committee has approved Northamptonshire County Council's Project Angel plans. The development will transform derelict land in the heart of Northampton into a new headquarters and office building, saving tax payers millions of pounds and generating a massive cash injection to the Town Centre.

Permission was granted on 6th May, and building work is estimated to start early next year. The design for the building which went to planners was that of international architectural and engineering practice BDP who were appointed following a rigorous selection process and public exhibition last year.

Northampton took part in the national Love Your Local Market campaign on 24th May with a day of entertainment and activities to attract new traders and encourage locals to support their market.

Northampton joined with over 700 markets across the country by taking part in the campaign to highlight the important role that the market plays in the heart of our town. Events held on the Market Square in support of the campaign included stilt walking bugs, balloon art and comedy waiters plus offering free stalls to attract new traders.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

Partnership Support

Over half a million pounds has been allocated by the Borough Council to support local agencies, charities and community groups that help people in Northampton. This year we have awarded partnership funding of £550,000 to 25 good causes to help them continue their work to support the town's communities and residents.

Over the last three years this Administration has made millions of pounds available to non-profit organisations and groups that offer practical support, advice and guidance to people in Northampton. There are some really fantastic groups in Northampton who help people in need and make our local communities better. In these difficult economic times even a small grant can make a big difference in helping them continue the work they are doing do.

As well as the partnership funding allocation, Northampton Borough Council has allocated £15,000 of its small grants fund to support another seven organisations that applied.

Events

People were invited to the Guildhall to make some noise on to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) on 16th May. The event was held in the Guildhall's courtyard where people were encouraged to bring along instruments to make a minute of noise against the violence and discrimination that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experience internationally. The Mayor of Northampton, Councillor John Caswell, councillors and representatives from community groups gave short speeches to raise awareness of the day and of all those people who are unable to speak out due to homophobia, transphobia, hate crime and prejudice.

The annual open air art exhibition at Abington Park Museum opened for its 53rd year on 10th May. Art in the Park features over 70 artworks from both professional and amateur artists from across the county. There are landscapes, portraits, abstracts and still life artworks using a variety of styles and techniques, and many are available to buy. The exhibition is showing in the courtyard at Abington Park Museum until 22nd June and admission is free.

Northampton Borough Council once again ran the popular Delapre Beer Festival at Delapre Park at the end of May, after saving last year's event from cancellation. The festival has always been very popular, and we were delighted to be able to host it again and give everyone the opportunity to enjoy Delapre Park at this fun family event. The event featured over 200 beers, 90 ciders, country wines, gin and locally sourced food as well as live music. Around 8,000 people attended last year's festival and after receiving feedback from customers, this year's event featured additional seating areas, a

traditional band stand and improved entry systems. We were also pleased that Phipps NBC celebrated its return to brewing in the town with an exhibition stand at the event. The company has recently started brewing in Northampton again after an absence of more than four decades.

On 7th May Northampton hosted its first ever Women's Cycling Tour in our Town Centre. It was a real privilege to be involved with this event, which attracted thousands of people into the town and helped put Northampton on the map as a venue for major sporting events.

Culture & Heritage

On the top floor of the Central Museum and Art Gallery the Western Front Association is showing a small but moving exhibition honouring the lives of many of the shoemakers who lost their lives in the First World War.

An exhibition showcasing innovative and intriguing work by international shoe designer, Kobi Levi, went on display at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery on 24th May. Titled 'Kobi and the Playful World of Shoes', the exhibition will be the first major showing in the UK, highlighting Kobi's designs that challenge the conventional definitions of design, art and fashion, and also explore the genre of 'extreme footwear'. The exhibition will feature hand crafted shoes designed as animals, bananas and even coffee pots, exploring how everyday items can be transformed into stylish and funny creations that can be worn or admired as art. We are delighted to be hosting Kobi's first major exhibition in the UK, which will run until 20th June.

During the Easter holidays and May half term, daily workshops were held for young children at the Central Museum and Easter Egg hunts took place on nine days in Abington Park.

Tony Howes performed his one man adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream in Abington Great Hall on 26th April and James Hornsby presented Charles Dickens' much loved novel Great Expectations at Guildhall Road on 16th May. Performance was also a major ingredient on 1st May when an enthusiastic audience enjoyed an evening of poetry, talks and debate to complement the exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of the death of John Clare.

The exhibition celebrating women's cycling - WOW – Women on Wheels has been very popular and was a great addition to the Women's Tour which ended its first stage in Northampton on 7th May. Related events have also been very popular with over 100 attending "An evening with Hannah Barnes" on 29th April.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement



Cabinet Member Report for the Environment

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

Environmental Services

Residents, community groups, businesses and schools are being encouraged to enter the town's 2014 Northampton in Bloom competition which was officially launched on 9th May at Abington Park. With 2014 marking the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WWI and the 825th anniversary of the granting of Northampton's Charter by Richard I in 1189, the theme chosen for Northampton in Bloom is 'remembrance and celebration'.

In keeping with this, members of the Northampton Bloom Planning Committee have arranged to plant a special remembrance rose in Abington Park's rose garden to launch this year's competition. The Friends of Abington Park, Choices gardening group, local businesses and volunteer gardener from St Peter and St Paul's Church all attended the launch, along with BBC Radio Northampton's gardening expert Johnnie Amos and the mayor of Northampton. Everyone involved is keen for more local people, community groups and businesses to enter Northampton in Bloom in 2014. Categories for the competition are school gardens, residential gardens, commercial/retail premises and allotments.

Environmental Health

The Borough Council supported Noise Action Week 2014 which began on 19th May to highlight the impact that noise has on people's health and well-being. Research shows that noise levels are important to people's happiness and physical and mental health well-being, and according to figures quoted by Environmental Protection UK, which co-ordinates Noise Action Week, most neighbourhood complaints to local authorities are about noise. Noise makers don't always realise that the noise they are making is irritating or annoying others. Usually asking them to keep the noise down is enough, but if that doesn't work and the problem becomes more extreme then we can step in to help.

Last year we issued 625 official warnings and 12 Noise Abatement Notices. Education and awareness raising are also important ways to tackle the issue. Summer is one of our busiest times for noise complaints and so Noise Action Week gives us a good opportunity to raise awareness of the issue of noise and the impact it can have on people's health. Throughout Noise Action Week the Borough Council's environmental health team and neighbourhood wardens were out in the town to raise awareness of noise issues for both noise makers and noise sufferers. As well as raising general awareness of the issue across the town, a group of officers and wardens spent time in Castle Ward talking to residents and giving advice.

Two new Park Rangers have been recruited and they will be joining the team in the next few weeks. The team are also awaiting the delivery of another four wheel drive vehicle which will allow them to carry out more patrols around the town's parks. Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers have worked together with local communities to assist with clean ups and planting days, and over the summer months, they will also be running a campaign of education and enforcement to address the problem of dog fouling across the town.

Park Management Committees

The first meetings of the Park Management Committees for Delapre and Abington Parks have now taken place and the first meeting of The Racecourse and Abington are planned. These groups are bringing together park users, local residents and other partners to work together to shape future plans for our parks

Licensing

During April two multi-agency checks were undertaken on school contract vehicles. Generally compliance was good with some minor issues, for which advice was given.

The team undertook a test purchase operation with the Gambling Commission on five major chain bookmakers in the Town Centre. Three of the Bookmakers failed, one a tentative pass and one good pass. A report on this operation is being prepared for the Licencing Committee.

Work has also been undertaken with Brackmills BID to improve facilities for the Street Trader pitches in that area.

The team have also continued to advise process and determine applications in relation to Licensing Act Applications, and continue to visit and suspend licences for non-payment of fees. Since the introduction of the power to suspend licences for non-payment we have reduced arrears from £23,000 to £2,000, most of the remainder are attributed to premises being closed down.

Councillor Mike Hallam

Cabinet Member for the Environment



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

Finance

The Finance team continues to implement and monitor the spending priorities as set out in the 2014/2015 budget. Under this Administration the Borough Council has undergone fundamental changes to the way it works in order to reduce waste and bureaucracy, put more money into front line services and be more financially stable for the future.

Good financial management is more important than ever to consolidate this work and to take it even further. Financial management processes are currently being improved through additional training and enhanced budget monitoring. The ongoing Financial Improvement Plan will allow this Administration to continue to deliver value for money for the tax-payer and deliver the services and projects our town deserves.

Revenues & Benefits

Over the course of the previous financial year a number of achievements were made by the Revenue and Benefits service.

Key reforms were delivered within the service including, the benefit cap, the spare room subsidy, the new Discretionary Housing payments and the implementation of the new Council Tax Support Scheme that replaced the old benefits scheme.

Changes to local discounts and exemptions in 2013/14 have also been managed successfully, meaning that the service continues to maximise income due to the Council to go into front line services.

The transition to Local Government Shared Services was made with no impact on our service to users. This included finalising the separation of the Revenues and Benefits element of the customer service team. This has been a delicate exercise to ensure that customers are not adversely impacted.

Current performance within the service remains high as demonstrated through the Key Performance Indicators for the service for the month of April.

Councillor Alan Bottwood
Cabinet Member for Finance