

# SNORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



## COUNCIL

Monday, 27 October 2014

**YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 27 OCTOBER 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 15<sup>th</sup> September 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 Mason to make a statement on "Devolution".

## 9. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor Mackintosh to propose and Councillor Marriott to second that:

“Council recognises the 825th anniversary of Northampton's Royal Charter as a significant anniversary in the town's history.

On this occasion chooses to confer the honour of the Freedom of the Borough of Northampton on three citizens who have worked hard for the town.

Keith Barwell OBE for his services to The Saints, the restoration of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh house at 78 Derngate and support for the town;

Brian Binley, Member of Parliament, for his long-standing support for Northampton as a County Councillor and MP, and for his role in the regeneration of the town;

Alderman John Dickie as a former Leader of Northampton Borough Council and longstanding supporter of the town;

In recognition of these achievements, and their long service to the people of Northampton, this Council resolves to award the three citizens the Freedom of the Borough and to hold a special meeting for the award ceremony."

ii) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor Conroy to second:

“This Council recognises the exceptional contribution to the town provided by the hard work of our staff.

This Council further recognises that staff are more effective and feel more valued when they are treated fairly and properly by the administration and this Council as a whole.

Unfortunately, this Council is also forced to recognise that though upcoming changes to their terms and conditions, hardworking staff are being forced to pay for the mistakes of his administration –from out of control borrowing, to failed projects.

Council therefore resolves that no further negative changes will be made to staff terms and conditions for the foreseeable future”.

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

This Council notes the motion passed at NCC last month calling for the County Council to “work with Borough and District Councillors and officer to develop an integrated cycling policy which raises the profile and priority of cycling...and ensures the interests and safety of cyclists.

This Council resolves to take the lead in making our town centre friendly for non-car users, to make every effort to ensure success of the County Council’s new ‘joined up’ plan”.

iv) Councillor Ashraf to propose and Councillor Eales to second:

“This council recognises the exceptional parking problems that residents and tenants regularly encounter in St James as a result of match day parking. This council therefore resolves to do the following:

1. Look into the possibility of issuing tenants in NBC homes that have allocated parking

areas with free match day parking permits. The properties considered would be: Cordwainer House, Stitchman House, Stirup House, Lapstone House, Eyeletter House, Abbey House, Melbourne House, Devonshire House, although this list is not exhaustive. This measure would ensure that premium allocated parking is not occupied by sports fans. This should be supplemented with sufficient enforcement on match days to tackle inappropriately and incorrectly parked vehicles.

2. This council also agrees to consult with Northamptonshire County Council and Highways to look at the possibility of extending free match day permits into other parts of St James, which may then replace the current parking permit scheme which is presently under review and thus remove the need to financially penalise the people of St James simply because a successful sports club is located on their door step”.

v) Councillor Mason to propose and Councillor Marriott to second:

This Council regrets that funding for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) has been reduced by Central Government.

This Council notes that a consultation is currently underway about changes to the CTRS. The consultation ends on the 09 November 2014.

This Council further notes that under the current scheme working age claimants can only claim a maximum discount for 85% of their Council Tax. The Conservative Administration is proposing to reduce this to somewhere between 80% and 75%.

This Council believes that the fairest and most prudent option would be to make no changes to the CTRS as the poorest and most vulnerable are already suffering hardship through the benefit reforms and a cost of living crisis.

## **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 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, 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](http://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](mailto:democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk)

Tel 01604 837722

Mail Democratic Services  
Northampton Borough Council  
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## MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 15 September 2014 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

**COUNCILLORS:** Ansell, Aziz, Beardsworth, Begum, Bottwood, I. Choudary, N Choudary, Conroy, Davies, Duncan, Eales, Eldred, Flavell, Ford, Glynane, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill, Lane, Larratt, Lynch, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Mason, Mennell, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant, Stone, Strachan and Yates

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

### 2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 14h July 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### 3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors King, Capstick, Subbarayan, Palethorpe, Golby and Ford.

### 4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that August had been a relatively quiet month but that he was pleased to have recently been invited to an event from the National Association of Women's Club (NAWC) and specifically encouraged women in Northamptonshire to get involved with the charity.

### 5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Fitzhugh addressed Council and stated that the Far Cotton Recreation Ground had been awarded Town Green Status in 2010. He explained that many people had enjoyed using the recreational ground but the ground had recently deteriorated which was partly attributed to the heavy fair equipment which had damaged the underground drainage system. He asked that the Council halt all bookings on the recreational ground until the issues had been resolved.

Ms Todd spoke as a member of Left Unity and expressed her of the proposed changes to the Constitution. She stated that politics was about the truth and was should not be exclusive and that changes to the Constitution broke the trust between the electorates and the politicians. She requested that Council reject the proposed changes to the Constitution and called for the Leader to resign.

Mr Connelly addressed Council and highlighted his proposal for resolving friction when members of the public do not feel as though they have been consulted with. He proposed that the recent consultations had had an open ended narrative and questioned how the information was quantified. It was suggested that in order to collate information, one option would be to provide a three tier tick box to allow people to state whether or not they agreed, disagreed or were neutral to the plans being consulted on.

Mr Leach addressed Council and stated that the de-pedestrianisation of Abington Street remained unpopular with members of the public. He suggested that the accident outside the bus station should act as a warning to Members.

Mr Adams addressed Council and questioned why there had been a significant underspend in housing for the first part of 2014/15. He also questioned whether tenants would get value for money from the appointment of the ALMO Chief Executive.

County Councillor J Hope referred to the report regarding the Amendment to the Constitution and stated that if there were two primary opposition parties in a Council, then leaders of those groups should be consulted when special urgency was being used. She questioned whether the administration felt threatened by the opposition.

Mr Mallard addressed Council and noted that it was imperative for the Council to engage with people when conducting a consultation exercise which had been successfully undertaken during the establishment of the ALMO. He further stated that it was important that consultation with all group leaders should be carried out when the Chief Executive makes a delegated decision to ensure trust remain between the politicians and the electorate.

Mr Wishart, spoke on behalf of St Edmunds Resident Association and stated that they had resisted the de-pedestrianisation of Abington Street and commented that it was not a conventional layout; originally the plans were to have a carriageway constructed but the lack of kerbs and delineation was not explained during the planning process. He questioned whether the Department of Transport were aware of the situation.

## **6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Mayor advised that 18 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 – detailed below.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 1, Councillor Markham explained that she did not have a complete breakdown of the figures but that some of the costs were set against the receipts.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 2, Councillor Markham explained that there had been a planning application by a developer but that affordable housing had not been part of the section 106 agreement as it was not considered sustainable for the developer.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 3, Councillor Hadland explained he could not elaborate on the number 4.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 6, Councillor Markham explained that all the compensation had been paid to date.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 8, Councillor Markham explained that there had been numerous changes in the Housing Department and that during the transitional period to the ALMO, it was necessary for temporary staff to be recruited.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 9, Councillor Eldred explained that it was a question for the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 13, Councillor Markham explained that there was ongoing monitoring of any problems regarding Decent Homes which included 4 project officers for each area, 3 liaison officers from NBC and 3 liaison officers from the contractors and further noted that a help line had been set up and all calls monitored.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 14, Councillor Hadland explained that developers had the right to choose whether to be named and further stated that should they put in a planning application, the information would be available to the public.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 15, Councillor Hadland explained that the business affected by the work on Abington Street had been offered business rate relief.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 16, Councillor Mackintosh explained that information relating to exit interviews was confidential but he would be happy to share the private information with the Leader of the Labour Group.

In response to a supplementary question relating to Question 18, Councillor Hallam explained that he would be happy to raise concerns on behalf of Mr Fitzhugh as it was within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there had



been a busy summer period and that there were numerous ongoing plans for the near future, including the German Christmas Market and a fireworks display to be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at St Becketts Park. It was noted that the Business Incentive Scheme had seen the creation of more jobs in the Northampton area an increase in the amount of investment.

In response to a question asked, Councillor Mackintosh explained that there had been a consultation exercise with residents about the redevelopment of the Greyfriars site which had closed a week ago, and once the information had been gathered, the full consultation results would be published. It was noted that that there was uncertainty whether Southfields Park would qualify for the Green Award, but that he was happy for Councillor Meredith to discuss how to progress it with the Cabinet Member for Environment. It was confirmed by Councillor Mackintosh that all businesses in Abington Street could apply for the Business Incentive Scheme. It was further reported that a public consultation had been undertaken with regards to parking issues in Dallington with a further one due to be held.

Councillor Markham submitted her Cabinet Member report and commented that the new rules regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs) would come into effect on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014. It was noted that the Decent Homes project was progressing well and that the work was currently on target with customer satisfaction levels as good. It was reported that there was a continuation of work for the ALMO implementation team who were preparing for a full handover to Northampton Partnership Homes. Having been congratulated on the merit of staff working on the Decent Homes project, Councillor Markham reported that the largest phase of the project was underway and noted that anti-social behaviour could lead to the termination of tenancy agreements. In response to a further question, Councillor Markham explained that residents of Far Cotton were going to be consulted on the possibility of being designated under the HIMO scheme but that there was a need to initially quantify it. She further confirmed that any bullying or whistle blowing allegations had been handled extremely well and effectively.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. In response to a question he explained that the Railway Station had level access at the back of the building and that appropriate signage would be erected to for disabled access. He further noted that he was happy to pledge that a suitable footbridge would be incorporated into the plan between the car park and the railway station to improve disabled access. He confirmed that 100 new Council homes would be built in Dallington Grange and that investments were being made which would include improvements to St James Mill Road.

Councillor Eldred submitted his Cabinet Report and elaborated thereon. In response to a question asked, it was explained that the Council, on appeal, had not lost museum accreditation but that it had been reversed and that there was to be future £8 million investment in the museum services.

## **8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS**

Councillor Marriott reported that Air Pollution had a significant impact on the quality of life and asked the administration to consider the causes of air pollution. He referred to the 7 air quality management systems that were in areas where there are high levels of air pollution and argued that the administration had encouraged the increase by promoting car and bus use in the town centre. He further noted that an increase in housing developments would lead to an increase in car use which again would impact on pollution levels. He stated that the Labour Group believed in the regeneration of the town centre, but requested that Cabinet conduct an air pollution investigation in conjunction with the County Council.

Councillor Hallam responded by commenting that air pollution was a serious concern to the administration but that it was a multi-agency job to examine and monitor. He noted that it was not a problem that could be apportioned solely to the Council but everyone had an amount of individual responsibility. He reported that much of the air pollution was as a result of static traffic and therefore improving traffic flow would improve the polluted areas and therefore traffic planning was of utmost importance. It was noted that a study was already being conducted which he would share with Councillor Marriott.

Councillor Marriott commented that the de-pedestrianisation of Abington Street would further exacerbate the pollution with an influx of traffic in the town centre and stated that Full Council needs to be aware of the air pollution study.

## **9. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE PLACES**

Councillor Marriott submitted a report that sought Council's approval for the change to Committee Place; Councillor Ashraf to replace Councillor Mason on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Mason seconded the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Ashraf replaces Councillor Mason on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **10. EXEMPTION FROM CALL-IN; URGENT KEY DECISION**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that sought Council note the use of the power contained in the Constitution to exempt a decision from call-in where the decision taken has been considered as urgent.

Councillor Hadland seconded the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

## **11. AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION - SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS**

Councillor Mackintosh submitted a report that sought Council's approval of the Amendment to the Constitution– Scheme of Delegations. It was noted that currently, the Chief Executive had to consult with all Group Leaders when making an urgent executive decision, but that the process could be made more efficient by consulting with the Leader of the Opposition and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny.

Councillor Markham seconded the report.

Council debated the report.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote:

There voted for the recommendations: Councillors Ansell, Bottwood, I Choudary, Duncan, Eldred, Flavell, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert, Hill. Lane, Larratt. Lynch, Mackintosh, Malpas, Markham, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant and Yates.

There voted against the recommendations: Councillors Beardsworth, Conroy, Glynane, Mennell and Meredith.

There abstained: The Mayor and Councillors Ashraf. Aziz, Begum, N Choudary, Davies, Eales, Gowen, Marriott, Mason, Stone and Strachan.

The report was carried.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the amendment to the Constitution detailed in paragraph 3.1.10 be approved

## **12. NOTICES OF MOTION**

- i) Councillor Hallam proposed and Councillor Hibbert seconded that:

'Council welcomes the recent Green Flag Awards for Abington Park and Delapre Park after being judged to be among the best parks in the country.

'Council notes that Delapre Park receives the award, from the charity Keep Britain Tidy, for the second year running and this is a first award for Abington Park which means they are among just 1,476 parks and green spaces across the country judged to be of a very high standard.

'Council recognises these awards are a tribute to the commitment by all the volunteers who are part of the dedicated Friends groups and other organisations that work alongside the Council staff and our contractor to reach these high standards.

'The Administration renews its commitment to maintaining our town's parks and green spaces and to seek Green Flag Awards across the town in the future.'

Council debated the motion.

The motion was carried.

ii) Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Conroy seconded:

This Council recognises the incredible stress many visitors and patients are under when they find it necessary to park at Northampton General Hospital.

Problems with not only the expense, but more worryingly, the availability of parking at the Hospital must not be allowed to continue.

This Council therefore resolves to make representation to Northampton General Hospital regarding the concern of residents and to be proactive in encouraging a solution, and working with all partner organisations to overcome these difficulties.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

iii) Councillor Meredith proposed and Councillor Glynane seconded:

There are many areas of the Eastern District where historic planting of the wrong kind of trees in the residential areas cause a number of problems for residents – from light being blocked from homes, to fallen debris, to damage to property from roots.

This Council resolves to develop a plan to remove trees that are identified as problematic and replace them with smaller trees more suited to residential areas. Councillor Hallam proposed and Councillor Markham seconded an amendment:

The amended motion read.

‘There are many areas of the Eastern District where historic planting of the wrong kind of trees in the residential areas cause a number of problems for residents – from light being blocked from homes, to fallen debris, to damage to property from roots.

‘This Council resolves to develop a plan to consider removing trees that are identified as problematic and consider replacing them with smaller trees more suited to residential areas.

‘This Council recognises this issue is complex and many trees are located on housing land that will soon be managed by Northampton Partnership Homes so therefore refers this matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.’

The proposed amendments were accepted and became the substantive motion:

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the substantive motion was carried.

iv) Councillor Mason proposed and Councillor Ashraf seconded that:

This Council notes recent research based on Ministry of Justice statistics shows that

nearly three homes are at risk of being repossessed in Northampton every day. In Northampton between July 2013 and June 2014 952 possession claims were issued to the county courts. This Council is concerned that any rise in interest rates in the near future will put more people at risk of repossession.

Therefore this Council resolves to explore all ways it can help local people with the threat of home repossession, such as supporting advice agencies to provide early help with those struggling financially.

One way Northampton Borough Council can help with the housing crisis is to increase the supply of affordable housing. We need more affordable housing for young families starting out and we need larger family homes for families that are expanding and growing up. We need housing that graduates from the university feel they can afford as a means of retaining some of our students post training.

This Council believes that building social housing can be funded by easing the restrictions on council borrowing for housing, a larger social housing grant programme, and a robust regime of private developer contributions.

Therefore this Council further resolves to lobby central government for such changes to happen so Northampton Borough Council can build more affordable homes.

Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor Hadland seconded an amendment:

The amended motion read:

‘This Council notes recent research based on Ministry of Justice statistics shows that nearly three homes are at risk of being repossessed in Northampton every day. In Northampton between July 2013 and June 2014 952 possession claims were issued to the county courts.

‘This Council is concerned that any rise in interest rates in the near future will put more people at risk of repossession.

‘Therefore this Council recognises the work already done to work with local charities and support services to help and advise vulnerable people and resolves to explore all ways it can help local people with the threat of home repossession, such as further support to advice agencies to provide early help with those struggling financially.

‘One way Northampton Borough Council can help with the housing crisis is to increase the supply of affordable housing. We need more affordable housing for young families starting out and we need larger family homes for families that are expanding and growing up. We need housing that graduates from the university feel they can afford as a means of retaining some of our students post training.

‘This Council believes that building social housing can be funded by easing the restrictions on council borrowing for housing, a larger social housing grant programme, and a robust regime of private developer contributions.

'This Council welcomes the new borrowing powers for extra borrowing for affordable housing announced by the Government in April 2014 and the announcement by this Administration to bring forward plans for housing in Dallington Heath which will include affordable housing and 100 new Council houses.

'Therefore this Council further resolves to continue to lobby central government for such changes to happen so Northampton Borough Council can build more affordable homes.'

The proposed amendments were accepted and became the substantive motion:

Council debated the substantive motive.

Upon a vote, the substantive motion was carried.

v) Councillor Stone to propose and Councillor Gowen to second that:

Northampton Borough Council notes that large supermarkets, whilst bringing certain benefits to the local area, also have a detrimental impact on local communities, the local economy and the environment;

Therefore welcomes the fact that Brighton & Hove, Chorley, Cornwall, Coventry, Crawley, Derby, Islington, Lambeth, Lancaster, Lincoln, Oxford, Preston, Sefton, South Hams, Southend-on-Sea, Southwark, Thanet, Wakefield, Weymouth & Portland and Wyre Forest Councils have submitted a proposal to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act for Local Authorities to be given the power to put a modest levy on very large retail outlets, or just supermarkets, in order to redress this detrimental impact, the specific wording of the proposal being:

"The government give local authorities the power to introduce a levy of up to 8.5% of the rateable value on supermarkets or large retail outlets in their area with a rateable annual value not less than £500,000 and for the revenue to be retained by local authorities in order to be used to help improve their local communities."

This Council also notes that the proposal also documents the detrimental impact, for example research has shown that for every pound spent in a large supermarket only 5p remains in the local economy while for independent retailers it is over 50p, that whilst in the last year large supermarket chains expanded their floor space by 2,750,000 square feet the number of people they employed fell by over 400 and that one of the largest supermarket chains has stated that it generated 28,500 tonnes of food waste at its stores and distribution centres and it threw out two-thirds of its bagged salad and 40% of its apples in the first six months of 2013;

Notes that the inspiration for the proposal has come from similar levies that have existed in Northern Ireland and Scotland for over two years and that the proposal notes the positive impact seen in those parts of the UK;

Notes that the VAT rise in 2011 was thirty five times higher as a cost to large retailers than this proposed levy would be and that following the VAT rise the major

supermarket chains embarked on a price war where thousands of items were reduced in price;

This Council further notes that if this power was acquired it would present the opportunity to raise further revenue for the benefit of local businesses and local communities if the Council wished to use it;

This Council resolves to support the proposal and inform Derby City Council of this in writing”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

**13. 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 9.37pm

**Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**Question 1**

**Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth**

With the changes in terms and conditions, will the new unpaid sick days have an impact on people's pensions?

***Response***

The unpaid sick days will not have any impact on pensions.

**Councillor David Mackintosh  
Leader of the Council**



## **Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Question 2**

#### **Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth**

If the new unpaid sick days will have an impact on people's pensions, will there be provision to address this shortfall?

#### ***Response***

The unpaid sick days will not have any impact on pensions.

**Councillor David Mackintosh  
Leader of the Council**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Question 3**

#### **Question to Councillor Mackintosh from Councillor Beardsworth**

Does this Cabinet believe that these changes to terms and conditions will be constructive to staff loyalty, or are they concerned, particularly with the pick up in the private sector, that these changes will lead to our most effective staff leaving?

#### ***Response***

The Council had to choose between changing the terms and conditions or cutting services and making redundancies.

The options that have been progressed have enabled services to be retained and employees have been able to maintain their salary. The revised terms and conditions are similar to those offered in the private sector so the link between losing the most effective staff to the private sector because of the changes to terms and conditions is not clearly established.

We will continue to monitor turnover levels so that any issues are identified at an early stage.

**Councillor David Mackintosh  
Leader of the Council**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Question 4**

#### **Question to Councillor Markham from Mr Norman Adams**

Little Cross Street (numbers 33 – 56)

The temporary DECANT and estimated 16 weeks to replace a defective walkway

During the period the council will be responsible for the Council Tax and other associated expenses

What is the cost to the Housing Revenue Account to date 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014?

#### ***Response***

The total rent loss is £112,764.37 including the rent associated with the decant properties.

The disturbance payments made are £4037.24

The Council Tax liability is £23,576

There are associated costs regarding removal costs for the decants is £11,250

Additional costs of extra void works to the temporary decant properties of carpeting & repainting is approx. £33,000

There will be additional survey costs & feasibility studies

**Councillor Mary Markham  
Cabinet Member for Housing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Question 5**

#### **Question to Councillor Markham from Mr Norman Adams**

I note that NBC gets £8.6 million additional HRA borrowing for 100 units at Dallington Beck.

Will the 100 units be for rent at social rent or the more expensive affordable rent?

#### ***Response***

The 100 units at Dallington Beck are to be let at affordable rent as this was a condition of the LGF HRA Bid Programme.

**Councillor Mary Markham  
Cabinet Member for Housing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Question 6**

#### **Question to Councillor Markham from Mr Teddy McNabb**

What methodology is used in "Individual Needs and Risk Assessment" and "Support Assessment Summary" to determine number of warden visits to vulnerable residents?

#### ***Response***

Following the Sheltered Housing review a new floating support service was introduced, based on assessing customers support needs and providing that support within our service, or referring to other statutory and voluntary agencies. The aim of the service is to enable customers to live independently for as long as they may wish.

The length and frequency of support visits will be determined by the customer's wishes and assessed needs. The level of support is agreed with customers using a score sheet which will determine the level of support, so that we can agree the amount of visits. This is not set in stone but is a guideline and assists with planning future visits and a Management tool to ensure that staff have capacity within their working hours to provide the support.

Reviews are recommended on a 3-6 month basis, or, led by customer request or change of circumstances.

**Councillor Mary Markham  
Cabinet Member for Housing**

## **Question for Full Council Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Question 7**

#### **Question to Councillor Markham from Mr Teddy McNabb**

What is the minimum standard qualification for someone to dictate what number of days a vulnerable resident has warden visits?

#### ***Response***

Both Support Officers and Independent Living Officers have had intensive training in assessing need and providing support, and this is ongoing to ensure their development. There is also an appeal process and a Management team who will visit customers and review their support if they are unsatisfied. We do not dictate to customers, but agree with them their support and the frequency of visits, in line with their assessed support needs.

**Councillor Mary Markham  
Cabinet Member for Housing**



# Agenda Item 7



## Report of the Leader of the Council

### Northampton Borough Council

27<sup>th</sup> October 2014

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October I welcomed Penny Mordaunt MP, Minister for Local Growth and to Northampton to see the exciting developments on Guildhall Road, Project Angel and the Vulcan Works. When these projects are completed they will bring thousands of extra people into the Town Centre, enhance the Cultural Quarter and create a new home for our creative industries.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October The Mayor and I welcomed The Mayor of Shangrao City in China and a delegation of visitors to The Guildhall to learn more about the Northampton Alive projects and the Enterprise Zone. The Mayor and business leaders are looking at investment opportunities in Europe and were keen to visit Northampton during their visit. It was great to welcome visitors from China to Northampton to see the great things happening in our town and to show them the fantastic opportunities for investment we have in the Enterprise Zone which has already helped to bring investment and create new jobs in our town. I look forward to working with The Mayor of Shangrao City and visitors from the Chinese delegation in the future and hope they choose to invest here.

Work has started on an exciting new Town Centre development that will bring a major new hotel and restaurant into the town centre. The £8 million Northampton Alive project will see a new 108 bedroom Premier Inn and restaurant contrasted in the former Albion Place temporary car park. The development will also create around 50 new jobs as we continue to stimulate the local economy. As the Enterprise Zone develops we are seeing more demand for hotel space from business people looking to stay a few nights in our town. We have a thriving Cultural Quarter, three professional sports teams and increasing numbers of business people coming into Northampton. With so many reasons to visit we need accommodation, and the new hotel and restaurant in the heart of our Cultural Quarter will be a real attraction to anyone looking to stay in Northampton.

In September I was pleased to announce that this Administration will be bringing back the Becketts Park fireworks display that was cancelled by the previous Lib Dem Administration. The event promises to be a great family night out that will bring thousands of people into the heart of our town. We are grateful to the University of Northampton and Heart for their support.

We have had a great year in Northampton with some fantastic events that have brought the crowds into the Town Centre and made it an exciting and vibrant place to visit. We also announced an exciting schedule of events that will take place in our town over the Christmas period. The countdown to Christmas starts with the annual Christmas Lights Switch On at the Market Square on 20<sup>th</sup> November, and there will be live bands, choirs singing Christmas carols and plenty of colourful entertainment. One of the highlights of the switch on evening will be the launch of a German Christmas Market, which will set up at the bottom end of Abington Street to sell traditional food, drinks, gifts and crafts until 21<sup>st</sup> December. Shoppers will also be able to enjoy the year round free parking offer.



The St Crispin's Street Fair will return to the Town Centre from 25th to 28th October, and this year will include an extra day.

2014 has been a year of celebration and commemoration here in Northampton. As well as being 100 years since the start of the First World War, it is also 825 years since our town was granted its charter by Richard I, and 850 years since the trial of Thomas a Becket at Northampton Castle. There has been a series of events and services to mark these important local anniversaries.

Children from two primary schools in Northampton planted oak trees in Bradlaugh Fields on 3rd October to celebrate the 825<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Northampton receiving its Royal Charter. 25 oak trees were planted by the students of Parklands and Vernon Terrace Primary to mark when Northampton was granted its first town charter by King Richard I in 1189.

A series of events and services took place in Northampton's churches during October to commemorate the 850th anniversary of the trial of Thomas a Becket at Northampton Castle in 1164. A civic service in honour of Becket was held at All Saints' Church on 5th October, and a display about Becket, including his relic, was on display at the Cathedral of our Lady Immaculate and St Thomas of Canterbury from 5th to 12th October. On 7th October there was an Ecumenical Vespers at St Peters Church Marefair with the Bishop of Northampton presiding and from 8th to 11th October The Masque theatre presented the play 'Becket' each evening at The Guildhall. On 10th October there was a Celebration of Mass by the Bishop of Northampton at the Cathedral of our Lady Immaculate and St Thomas of Canterbury, and on 12th October at The Church of the Holy Sepulchre there was a Eucharist followed by a procession and I was pleased to unveil a commemorative plaque at the site of the North Gate.

On 3rd October officially opened the 'Echoes of Northampton Castle' exhibition at Hazelrigg House, which explores the long history of Northampton Northampton Castle including its role in the trial of Thomas a Becket. The exhibition is open from Monday to Saturday until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015, and admission is free.

This year also marks the third anniversary of the Lava and Ignite tragedy. I was disappointed that the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute the owners. Having received primacy of investigation from the Police earlier this month, the Borough Council is now seeking legal advice regarding the company's status and the viability of pursuing them for prosecution.

## **Community Safety**

Community Safety Partnership Weeks of Action have been held in Semilong and Blackthorn. The key focus for the weeks has been community engagement with a range of approaches being undertaken including door knocking and a partnership stand in key locations. Both weeks have seen high levels of engagement with a range of agencies taking part.

Residents have been warned about bogus callers claiming to be from the Borough Council offering assistance in making a personal injury claims. The Borough Council is

aware of a handful of residents who have been called by these bogus callers and have taken action to warn the public.

**Councillor David Mackintosh**  
Leader of the Council



## Cabinet Member Report for Housing

### Northampton Borough Council

27<sup>th</sup> October 2014

#### **Northampton Partnership Homes**

The setting up of Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) is still on track and will go live on 5th January 2015. The Council is working with the Interim Managing Director and the Shadow Board to complete the Management Agreement and other key documents, which set out how the arrangements between the two organisations will work. The Borough Council has also supported a group of Shadow Board members to appoint the new Chief Executive for NPH. The appointment is due to be formally made at the next Shadow Board meeting.

Employees potentially transferring to NPH received notification of the proposed transfer on 7<sup>th</sup> October. The final list of employees transferring will be completed in December.

Arrangements are well underway to prepare for the start of the new organisation, such as new vehicle branding, uniforms, the new phone number and website. All changes to services will be communicated to tenants, leaseholders and other key partners/stakeholders.

#### **Tenants' Conference**

The next Tenants' Conference is taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November at The Saints Rugby Ground. It is hoped there will be a lot of interest from tenants as this will be the final conference before Northampton Partnership Homes takes over in January 2015.

#### **Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing**

The Additional Licensing Scheme for HMOs comes into effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Over recent months the scheme has been widely publicised and steps have been taken to ensure that landlords and property owners are aware of the impact it will have on them. A number of applications have been received to date, and officers are preparing to send out reminders and take further follow-up action to persuade landlords to apply for licences. We will monitor this carefully and be ready to take enforcement action against landlords who do not comply with the designation after having had reminders to do so.

**Councillor Mary Markham**  
Cabinet Member for Housing



## **Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Town Centre**

In September Aflora & Luxe Gifts opened a new store in Market Walk thanks to support from the Borough Council's Business Incentive Scheme. In just six months almost £200,000 in grants have been agreed, helping more than 20 businesses start up, make improvements, relocate or expand. This has led to over £1.2m in private sector funding coming back into Northampton and over 50 new jobs being created.

Increased use of our Car Parks as a result of the free parking offer brings more people, so a new cleaning regime has been introduced to improve the standard of cleanliness in our Town Centre Multi Storey Car Parks. Work is also underway to improve the landscaping in and around our surface car parks. Further enhancements are being explored to make them more pleasant and attractive to visitors.

### **Regeneration**

On 8th October, Cabinet met and approved the next key steps to progress the redevelopment of the former Vulcan Works and the creation of a creative industries hub in our town's Cultural Quarter. The Creative Hub, which is one of the latest projects to join the Northampton Alive programme, will be situated in the heart of the Cultural Quarter in Guildhall Road and will provide an environment for creative 60 businesses and around 240 jobs. Work on Vulcan Works will begin in 2015 with completion expected by December 2016.

The top of Guildhall Road has been temporarily closed to traffic so that work can be conducted to further enhance the Cultural Quarter. The work will improve Guildhall Road so that it can support the organisations and businesses within the Cultural Quarter as part of the Borough Council's work to attract more visitors and stimulate the local economy. Guildhall Road is the heart of Northampton's growing Cultural Quarter, and work will take place to widen the pavements, allowing space for outdoor café tables and street entertainment. There will be parking spaces on both sides of the road and more spaces will be created in the lower part of Guildhall Road. Work is set to be completed by 20th November, ready for Christmas shoppers and the panto season.

The future provision of a refreshment facility at Delapre Abbey has been secured after agreement between the Borough Council and the Friends of Delapre Abbey. The new permanent location will be within the 19th century stable block. Every year thousands of people visit the historic abbey and the current Friends of Delapre Abbey (FoDA) tea room has provided a place to sit and relax in the beautiful surroundings.

We are committing over a million pounds into the restoration of the Delapre Abbey, and has secured grants from both Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage that will see more than £7 million invested in preserving our history. This work will mean that over

the next few years the abbey will not only be protected for future generations but plans are in place for it to become a regionally significant attraction with a refreshment facility being part of the offer. The first phase, replacing the roof of the Abbey, is nearing completion. Tenders for the main contract have been evaluated and a start on site is imminent.

We are providing an upgrade in power supply to support businesses in the Waterside Enterprise Zone. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has already approved a £900,000 Local Infrastructure Fund loan towards the overall cost of the project. Business expansion in our Enterprise Zone, particularly in the St James Mill Road area, mean that the power supply is stretched to the limit. With Cosworth set to open its new Advanced Manufacturing Centre and Freefoam looking to increase capacity, the infrastructure is desperately in need of an upgrade. We are doing all we can to make life easier for businesses, which is paying off in terms of private sector investment and job creation.

## **Planning**

The Inspector's report on the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy has been published, and we are disappointed that the Plan was found to be sound and fit for adoption, despite our representations to the contrary. We made it quite clear that we could not support development that placed additional pressure on an already overloaded infrastructure, and we will continue to fight for a reasonable solution for Northampton. The Report will be considered by the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee later in the year, when we will once more make our views known.

### **Councillor Tim Hadland**

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning



## **Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Events**

In September we announced the fantastic schedule of events that will take place in the Town Centre in the run up to Christmas. Highlights include a German Christmas Market, the return of the St Crispin Street Fair and a spectacular firework display in partnership with the University of Northampton and supported by Heart FM on Bonfire Night.

The St Crispin Street Fair will return to the Town Centre from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October with some spectacular rides.

On 20<sup>th</sup> November the town will light up for Christmas with the annual lights switch on in the Market Square. There will be a full programme of festive fun, including entertainment from Royal & Derngate panto stars before the lights are switched on and the magic of Christmas begins.

One of the highlights of the switch on evening will be the launch of a German Christmas Market, which will set up along Abington Street to sell traditional food, drinks, gifts and crafts until 21<sup>st</sup> December.

A festival of Christmas songs and carols will take place on the Market Square on 14<sup>th</sup> December from 4pm to 5pm.

This is a great line up that kick starts with the street fair in October half term. It promises to provide a lot of fun before November's Bonfire Night and Christmas launch.

### **Culture & Heritage**

September saw the opening of the 'National Grid' exhibition at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. The exhibition commemorates the dismantling of the 150 year old gasworks site on Towcester Road. With the old site now being regenerated, this exhibition looks back at a power house of the industrial revolution and the lives of those who worked there.

Heritage Open Days at Abington Park Museum saw a local Music and Drama group interpret memories of Abington Park from elderly residents of St Johns Home on the Wellingborough Road.

During October, the Northampton Town & County Art Society opened for their 101<sup>st</sup> annual show at the Guildhall Road venue. The exciting array of artists' work is on display in this ever popular annual exhibition and most exhibits are for sale.

On 3rd October a new exhibition opened at Hazelrigg House entitled 'Echoes of Northampton Castle'. The building is one of Northampton's oldest, and is close to the Norman Church of St Peter, and the site of the medieval castle. Displays in the house discover its past in a family friendly exhibition.

Ukulele Workshops have been on offer to budding players at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery during October. Half term workshops have also been open to young people with topics ranging from 'Leather Stamping', 'The Big Draw' and 'Ghoulish Crafts'.

### **Northampton Leisure Trust**

The Trust, in partnership with the Borough Council and Northamptonshire Sport, hosted its 6th Annual Sports Awards evening at the Guildhall on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The event was funded by eleven different sponsors and celebrated and showcased local sporting achievement, dedication and hard work across fourteen categories. Winners go forward to the Northamptonshire Sports Award being held on 6th November.

### **Forums**

The LGBTQ forum has been promoting the 'Straight Allies' campaign, which was the focus for International Coming Out Day, held at the Royal & Derngate Theatre on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

The Youth Forum supported the Borough Council's Heritage Open Days by providing tours around the Guildhall, and the Diverse Community Forum has been getting involved in supporting Diwali, which we were successful with a bid to the Arts Council, for £10,000.

### **Customer Services**

National Customer Services Week is a great opportunity to highlight how the Borough Council works to provide services for customers as well as demonstrating strong partnership working with external partners. This year's National Customer Services Week ran from 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October, and events included:

Staff Borough Council staff and Barclays' Digital Eagles were at the One Stop Shop to give customers a variety of support and demonstrate how to use services online.

On 7th October The Guildhall's Courtyard was home to many of the council's partner organisations who were there to talk to residents about their services. In the Market Square other partners, including Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue and the council's Call Care team and Neighbourhood Wardens were available to talk about their work.

On 10th October the Borough Council joined up with Barclays' Digital Eagles to provide basic IT skills, including how to safely shop online, how to create an email account and use mobile and internet banking as well as demonstrating how to keep in touch with friends and family, making free calls with messaging client, Skype.

**Councillor Brandon Eldred**  
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement





## **Cabinet Member Report for the Environment**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

### **Environmental Health**

The New Neighbourhood Warden and full time Park Ranger began work at the end of August. They are now completing a period of on the job training and have begun working within their designated areas.

The results of the dog fouling campaign which took place from July to September resulted in seven Fixed Penalty Notices being served and 32 dog fouling letters being sent. Nine enforcement sessions of two hours each have been carried out over nineteen different hot spot locations.

On 8<sup>th</sup> October, Cabinet extended the Borough Council's fly tipping policy to include rubbish dumped on privately owned land such as shared alleys. Between February and August 2014, the council received 4,074 reports of fly tipping. Of these 234 were confirmed to relate to fly tipping in private alleyways or similar areas that the council is not responsible for clearing. The Cabinet decision means that the Council is now obliged to include the removal, where permissible and appropriate, of fly tipping on shared owned alleys, entrances and courts and to try and recover the costs from the fly tippers or land owners.

### **Park Management**

The development of Park Management Committees continues. Groups are meeting regularly for Abington, Delapre, The Racecourse, and Eastfield parks. A new group recently met covering Swanhaven Park. We are also working together with the Friends of Bradlaugh Fields and Friends of Victoria Park to help develop Park Management Committees for these parks.

### **825<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Northampton Charter**

The Borough Council, in partnership with the Friends of Bradlaugh Fields and local primary schools, have planted 25 Oak Trees (creating an avenue) to mark the 825<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Northampton Charter.

### **Licensing**

During September two multi-agency checks were undertaken on Private Hire and Hackney Carriages. Of the 37 vehicles checked nine were found to be non-compliant. Two were taken off the road and another two received a delayed prohibition notice.

The Licensing Committee decided to adopt three night time Hackney ranks at the top of Bridge St, George's Row and Lady's Lane (Roadmender) which will operate between 2300 and 0500 daily.

**Councillor Mike Hallam**

Cabinet Member for the Environment



## **Cabinet Member Report for Finance**

### **Northampton Borough Council**

**27<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

#### **Finance**

Work on the Council's Budget for 2015/16 is now well underway to identify the issues facing the authority in the next and future financial years. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated that he will make his Autumn Statement on 3rd December which will help to give an indication of the national picture and the Administration will announce budget plans for the Council later in December. The Council continues to face significant challenges on its finances as the planned reductions in Government funding are expected to continue until at least 2018. This will particularly affect the General Fund revenue budget and the Council must reduce its spending and increase its income to balance its budget.

KPMG, the Council's external auditors, signed off the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2013/14 on 30th September and the annual report identified no issues.

#### **Council Tax Support Scheme**

A consultation is currently underway asking people in Northampton to have their say on how changes to the Council Tax Reduction scheme may affect them. The Council Tax Reduction scheme provides financial support for people on low incomes to help with their Council Tax bill. In Northampton the scheme helps around 18,000 people.

Northampton Borough Council has been asking about how the scheme is currently working. People will also have the chance to comment on the future of the scheme and how proposed changes from 1st April 2015 may affect them.

The consultation has been available on the Council's website and there were three drop in sessions at The Guildhall for anyone interested in asking questions about the chances or looking to find out more about the scheme.

#### **Revenue and Benefits**

Pressure on the Benefits service is expected to increase during the second part of the year with the introduction of two reforms. One will see monthly data transfers of real – time earning information from HMRC. This will lead to a large number of cases requiring manual review and re – assessment. Funding is expected from the Department for Work and Pensions. A second change to the method of applying earnings to work cases is also expected. This could lead to a reduction in benefit against the old assessment method, leading to increased enquiries to the service. The position will be monitored carefully.

**Councillor Alan Bottwood**  
Cabinet Member for Finance