

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 8 June 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Markham (Chair); Councillor Nunn (Deputy Chair); Councillors Bottwood, Eldred, Hadland, Hallam, Hibbert and King

APOLOGIES:

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

The minute of the meeting held on the 11th May 2016 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There were no items to be heard in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr Calder addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 11 – Northampton Low Emission Strategy (NLES). He commented that the number of urban areas identified as having elevated levels of air pollution was concerning, specifically the Nitrogen Dioxide levels and asked for extensive consultation of the matter.

Mr Clarke addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 11 and stated that he considered there to be a disconnect between the Low Emission Strategy and the actions of the administration having opened up Abington Street to traffic and thus potentially increasing pollution within the Town Centre. He commented that the mortality rates in Northampton were some of the highest rates in the country. He asked that the consultation be extensive and asked that residents associations and forums be held in order to encourage participation in the consultation.

Mr Martin also spoke in respect of Item 11 and stated that any strategy to reduce emissions was positive and asked that any future developments that increased traffic and pollution be given very careful consideration.

Ms Timson addressed Cabinet in respect of Item 7 - Multi Agency Strategy for Tackling, Preventing and Reducing Rough Sleeping in Northampton and stated that she welcomed the strategy but had a number of concerns with regards to the social problems of drugs and alcohol and questioned what facilities and amenities would be provided at the temporary night shelter for homeless people and asked whether it would be kept under review.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were none.

7. MULTI AGENCY STRATEGY FOR TACKLING, PREVENTING AND REDUCING ROUGH SLEEPING IN NORTHAMPTON

Councillor Ashraf addressed Cabinet and thanked the officers for their work and welcomed the recommendations and urged the Council to look assisting families and tenants before residents were homeless as prevention was the key to dealing with the issue. She also asked that there be multi-agency working with faith groups including mosques, to enable people to access to services through various means.

The Leader confirmed that during the drafting of the strategy, faith groups had been included in discussions as well as many other agencies.

Councillor Stone commented that she welcomed the strategy but that more consultation would have been preferable. She also expressed concern that some rough sleepers were non-English speaking and that this concerned her as they were not always able to understand how to access the services the Council were offering and that the administration needed to work with support agencies.

The Leader reiterated that there had been consultation with various groups and an extensive consultation had been undertaken.

Councillor Smith commented that she too welcomed that strategy. She stated that a long term action plan was needed to prevent rough sleeping not just in the near future but life-long.

Councillor Hibbert as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon. He thanked the Labour Group for their support and noted that the strategy had been developed out of workshops, groups and discussions with agencies to ensure that work to tackle homelessness was being carried out consistently. He recognised the detrimental physical and mental affect that homelessness and rough sleeping had on people and noted that there were some homeless people who were reluctant to engage with officers and a more assertive approach would be a possible solution but commented that some rough sleepers had refused help and therefore choosing to continue in the lifestyle. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert stated that there had been over 30 groups involved in the consultation and noted that the facilities would mainly be for male rough sleepers as they made up the majority of those identified as homeless but confirmed that provisions at the facility could be provided for females and that the situation would be monitored and kept under review.

RESOLVED:

1. That 'Together we change lives' (which was attached to the report as Appendix A) as Northampton's 3 year Multi Agency Strategy for ending the need for people to sleep rough in the borough be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing in consultation with the Chief Executive, to make minor changes to the Strategy.
3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing, to establish a temporary night shelter, subject to due diligence and the production of a detailed business case that has been signed-off by the Section 151 Officer.

8. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 - POLICY UPDATE

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and commented that the revised RIPA policy could potentially be used to tackle people trafficking, child exploitation and modern slavery and welcomed the report.

The Leader submitted a report and noted that some of the recommendations contained within the report had come about as a result of an inspection carried out by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners at the latter part of 2015.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update on the outcome of the Inspection carried out by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners on 1st December 2015 be noted.
2. That the updated RIPA Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer to:
 - a) update the RIPA Policy to include the names and contact details of new Authorising Officers after they have been appointed; and
 - b) make such future amendments to the Policy which are in the opinion of the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer minor and are necessary to reflect either legislative requirements, relevant guidance or current good practice.

9. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT WESTBRIDGE DEPOT - WASTE TO ENERGY PLANT

This item was withdrawn.

10. FLY TIPPING UPDATE AND FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

Councillor Davenport addressed Cabinet and questioned the number of enforcement officers and also asked the administration to consider the needs of vulnerable people who had been issued penalties for dropping litter.

Councillor Meredith commented that that Council had done an excellent job of removing fly-tipping and maintaining a good clean standard but suggested that they had now become a victim of their own success as people who were fly-tipping were not being punished but their waste was being removed by the Council and suggested that the report did not go far enough in tackling fly-tipping urged the Council to catch the offenders.

Councillor Bottwood, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted a report and commented that the purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's approval to serve Fixed Penalty Notices to a maximum of £400. He stated that the Council were looking at educational avenues to make people aware of the impact and damage of fly-tipping.

The Deputy Leader stated that it was sensible for the collection of fly-tipping to be covered by the cost of the fine.

RESOLVED:

1. That the actions outlined in 3.1.1 – 3.1.5 of the report being taken to deal with fly-tipping in Northampton be noted.

2. That the level of Fixed Penalty Notice for fly tipping be set to the legally allowed maximum of £400 with a reduction to £250 if the penalty was paid before the period of 10 days following the date of the Notice.

11. NORTHAMPTON LOW EMISSION STRATEGY (NLES)

Councillor Stone commented that Air Quality (AQ) was extremely important and the figures contained within the report raised concerns. She noted that the testing of AQ was not being carried out in the right places and that that results of the test should be made available to members of the public and the Council on the authority's website.

Councillor Davenport reported that the emissions on the 'Kingsthorpe corridor' needed addressing and stated that an increase in building developments would result in a further escalation of emissions.

Councillor McCutcheon commented that the number of Sustainable Urban Extensions granted through the planning process needed to demonstrate consideration of alternative transport links, such as a bus service, to reduce reliance on cars and consequentially lowering emissions.

Councillor Bottwood, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon.

RESOLVED:

That the draft NLES attached to the report, subject to the outcome of an 8 – 12 week period of public consultation be approved. The results of the consultation would be reported back to Cabinet in the Autumn.

12. ACQUISITION OF THE FREEHOLD OF NO. 9 GUILDHALL ROAD

Councillor Birch addressed Cabinet and noted that she welcomed the principle of the acquisition of the property and further developments to enhance and develop the cultural quarter.

Councillor Hadland, as the relevant Cabinet Member, submitted a report and commented that it was a very important part of the Cultural Quarter and would play an important role in the future.

RESOLVED:

1. That the principle of the acquisition by this Council of the freehold interest in the property, known as 9 Guildhall Road shown edged red upon the plan at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
2. That the Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning be authorised to approve the terms of the acquisition in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning.
3. That inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme for 2016/2017 of up to £462,000 (inclusive of statutory acquisition costs) to support this purchase, subject to prior approval by the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning and the Chief Finance Officer following due diligence and a sufficient business case to support this be approved
4. That the drawdown of up to £462,000 from the Council's Strategic Investment

Reserve as the funding source for the acquisition of 9 Guildhall Road be approved..

The meeting concluded at 6.46pm