

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 20 July 2015 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Flavell (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Choudary, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Eldred, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, M Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, Lynch, Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Shaw, Smith and Stone.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th June 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Chunga, Birch and Walker.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor noted that her 'Bloomin Great Tea Party' had been held on 22nd June 2015 and a significant amount of money was raised.

It was noted that on 11th July Northampton joined Towns, Cities and Communities around the world in remembering the Srebrenica genocide where she participated in a wreath laying ceremony.

The Mayor asked that Members join her in showing their respects on Saturday 15th August 2015 at a Service of Remembrance on to mark the 70th anniversary of VJ Day.

The Mayor appealed to Councillors to volunteer collecting for the Poppy Appeal. It was noted that volunteers would be needed for static sites in Northampton between the Saturday 24th October and Saturday 7th November 2015. For further details, Members were asked to contact the Branch Secretary, Deirdre McMillan. deirdremcmillan@outlook.com or 01604 451244 for details.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Norman Adams addressed Council and questioned what the Administration thought of the first budget of the National Government; he commented that they had been obliged to sell the Housing Stock having to give back the money raised to the exchequer, obtaining just 50% of the right to buy receipts and the benefits cap of £20,000 and reminded the Leader of her previous promise that the Decent Homes money would not be squandered.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 16 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public 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 3, Councillor Hadland explained that there had been a meeting between the Council and the consortium and that the Council were not in a position to reveal who they were.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 8, Councillor Markham explained that she had met with Mrs Butcher and had identified 5 pieces of land; further meetings would be had.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 12, Councillor Bottwood explained that there were conditions with all contracts but that they had put solutions into place and had caught up with the back log at the end of last week.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 14, Councillor Hadland explained that Castle House was just one of a number of sites forming the Heritage Gateway and each application will be supported on their own merits and that there could be no prejudgement of any potential planning application.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 15, Councillor Bottwood explained that the water level in Swanhaven lakes was the responsibility of Anglian Water.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Markham submitted her Cabinet Member report and explained that the outturn position at the end of 2014/15 was in good financial health which she attributed to the diligent work of the previous Administration and Council officers. She further noted that she had welcomed the first budget of the 2015 to 2020 national Government and the introduction of the National Living wage. She noted that the Chairman of Northampton Town Football Club (NTFC) had announced he had agreed the heads of terms for the sale of controlling interests in the Football Club and also made reference to the numerous commemorations that the Council had participated in in recent weeks. In response to questions asked, Councillor Markham explained that the administration was carrying out an exploratory exercise relating to devolution to local authorities. Responding to questions asked, Councillor Markham stated that

the Living Wage had been adopted already by the Council and noted that whilst the cost of living had levelled, the living wage was currently significantly higher than the minimum wage.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and explained that Audit training was being held on Monday 27th July 2015 and encouraged all Members who were interested in Audit to attend. In response to questions asked, he noted that there had been an ownership issue with regards to Swanhaven Lakes and offered assurance that he would listen to pleas of funding assistance.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that on the 16th July 2015 there had been a ministerial visit to Northampton, specifically to look at the Enterprise Zone; on the same date a West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (WNJSPC) meeting was held and due to a number of ongoing issues, Members considered leaving the Committee the best way forward. However, whilst no longer being part of the Committee, NBC would continue with joint working until the expiration of the Committee in Autumn 2015. In response to questions, Councillor Hadland confirmed that all planning applications are advertised in the press and public places and informed Council that they were at the final stage of demolition of the old Castle Station. In response to a further question, Councillor Hadland explained that of the 67 jobs created through the Business Incentive Scheme, the employment offered was of varying skills, some of which were apprenticeships.

Councillor Eldred submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that there had been numerous events held recently, including the Northampton Carnival and Alive@Delapre. He stated that they had received very good feedback for both the events and local businesses had been very positive about it and thanked Councillors and Officers for their help at the events. He further commented that the Beach would be making a return to the Market Square. It was noted that there had been many events held in the local museums and a temporary 'Pimms Bar' had assisted in increasing visitors. In response to questions asked, Councillor Eldred commented that he would be able to exchange information with any Councillors with regards to the number of people who had volunteers and the hours put in.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that the number of licensed Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) had increased and further action would be taken against those not licensed. It was explained that there had been multi-agency working with the Housing and Wellbeing Team and Northampton General Hospital to assist vulnerable people being discharged from the hospital and intergrading into the community. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert stated that he was not aware of the exact number of rough sleepers, but that as soon as he had them he would pass them on to the interested Councillors. He also explained that tenants who were not adhering to the 'Tenant's Charter' was an issue for Northampton Partnerships Homes (NPH).

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and explained that whilst there had been an increase in the overall number of crimes, the number of serious acquisitive crimes had decreased. She also went on to list the number of projects that the Community Payback team had undertaken in partnership with NBC and the CSP.

In response to questions asked, Councillor King confirmed that she would supply a breakdown of figures to Councillors with regards to the Domestic Homicide Reviews from the Police. She further confirmed that the Police were treating the increased number of elderly being abused as a priority and were working together to provide support and to identify the most vulnerable.

Councillor Bottwood submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that there had been a successful prosecution of a person being fined for not clearing up their dog excrement and had been issued with a £200 fine. In response to questions asked, Councillor Bottwood commented that there was a continued dialogue with Environmental Management Service (EMS) to ensure that backlogs were dealt with promptly in future. He further explained that he was not sure how travellers who had recently arrived at the Mayfair Carpark had gained access to the site but that a padlock appeared to have been removed. He further stated that there was no area of the Town that had been deliberately excluded from Northampton in Bloom.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Stone, as Leader of the Labour Group stated that there was a need for a cross party approach to Planning issues in order to benefit the Town. She commented that an ethical planning policy was necessary she considered the current planning policy as favouring the interests of the developers. She stated that Article 4 had restricted the number of HMO's to 15% but that there was a need for family homes and not allowing them being developed into one bed room flats as a way of maximizing profits. She further reported that there was currently a housing crisis and that this was being exacerbated by developers avoiding investing the money promised though the Section 106 agreement and investment into infrastructure. She further commented that byelaws needed introducing to retail areas to limit the number of pound shops, tanning shops and betting shops; areas needed to be safe and well lit and there was a need to put people before exploitative planning.

In response, Councillor Hadland stated that the Labour Group had been almost absent from discussions relating to Planning Policy for the past 12 years and state that everybody would like to have a nice environment and a plethora of family homes. It was explained that the Joint Core Strategy currently stipulates that 35% of new homes built have to be affordable and this satisfied some housing needs. He further reported that it was better to have a development with some affordable homes than no development with no affordable homes.

Councillor Stone responded by stating that this was an issue of cross party working and emphasised the need to consider Town and County Planning. Planning, she stated was a policy for good and there was a need to put people before exploitative developers.

9. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

Councillor Lane, as the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, submitted a report which sought Council to note the contents. He thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and Councillor Gowen and Ansell for Chairing the Panels.

Councillor Sargeant seconded the report:

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15.

10. CHANGES TO CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Markham submitted a report which sought the confirmation of changes to Outside Bodies and Consultation Appointments.

Councillor Hallam seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Appointments to Outside Bodies and Consultation Appointments set out in the report be confirmed.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

- i) Councillor Stone proposed and Councillor T Eales seconded that:

“This Council notes that the EU Referendum Bill is currently working its way through the parliamentary process.

This Council also notes that Northampton and the surrounding area have many businesses that operate across the European Union such as Carlsberg and Cosworth.

This Council believes that it is time Northampton residents and the rest of the UK population had a vote on our European Union membership.

This Council believes that it is in the overwhelming interests of Northampton that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland remains a member of the European Union.

This Council urges Northampton residents to vote ‘Yes’ to remain in the European Union in the forthcoming coming referendum”.

Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded an amendment:

Amended motion to read:

This Council notes that the EU Referendum Bill is currently working its way through the parliamentary process.

This Council also notes that Northampton and the surrounding area have many businesses that operate across the European Union such as Carlsberg and Cosworth.

This Council believes that it is time Northampton residents and the rest of the UK population had a vote on our European Union membership.

This Council urges Northampton residents to vote in the forthcoming referendum and to ensure that they are as informed as possible about the choice they will be making when casting their ballot.

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

ii) Councillor G Eales proposed and Councillor Smith seconded:

“This Council notes that our contract with Enterprise Managed Services (EMS) comes to an end in 2018.

Therefore this Council believes all options must be considered when this seven year period ends.

This Council believes consideration needs to be given for bringing all or part of Environmental Services back in house.

This Council asks the Cabinet to set up an in-house bid team so that this option can be both carefully and fairly considered”.

Councillor Bottwood proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded an amendment:

Amended motion read:

This Council notes that our contract with Enterprise Managed Services (EMS) comes to an end in 2018.

Therefore this Council believes all options must be considered when this seven year period ends.

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Council debated the substantive motion.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

Council noted that the proposer of Motion iii) had agreed to incorporate the amendments submitted by the Conservative Group and agreed to the alteration (as below)

iii) Councillor McCutcheon to propose and Councillor Russell to second:

This Council notes that Northampton has taken much pride in its association with Walter Tull. Walter Tull was born in 1888 and was the only second player of mixed race to play in top division football. Walter Tull played for Northampton Town and appeared in 110 matches and scored many goals.

In 1914 Walter Tull joined the British Army and fought in six major battles. He proved to be a brave soldier but was sadly killed in action in 1918.

This Council passed a motion in December 2012 proposed by David Mackintosh, the then Leader of the Council, to support the campaign for Walter Tull to be posthumously awarded the Military Cross.

This Council asks the Chief Executive to write to our three Members of Parliament stating this Council wishes them to continue with the campaign to have Walter Tull posthumously awarded the military cross”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

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

“Northamptonshire County Council instigated similar terms and conditions changes to their staff contracts ahead of those put in place by NBC last year. Following a thorough review, NCC have subsequently decided that the changes to sick pay were overly harsh. NCC Chief Executive Paul Blantern notes that Council “understand the goodwill and tremendous effort that (staff) continue to demonstrate during austerity”. As such they have, with immediate effect, relaxed the policy, reducing the number of days before staff are eligible to sick pay from three to one. NCC requires a further £148 million in savings over the next 5 years, and this Council is informed by the administration that NBC are in far better financial shape. If this is true, there can be no financial justification for this policy moving forward.

This Council resolves to recognise the hard work, commitment and professionalism of staff under extremely trying circumstances, and to immediately pay sick pay from the second day of illness”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote;

There voted for the Motion: Councillors Ashraf, Beardsworth, Cali, Choudary, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Gowen, Haque, Marriot, McCutcheon, Meredith, Russell, Smith and Stone.

There voted against the Motion: Councillors Ansell, Aziz, Bottwood, Caswell, Eldred, Golby, Hallam, Hibbert, J Hill, M Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Lynch, Malpas, Markham, Nunn Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Sargeant and Shaw.

There abstained the Mayor.

The Motion was lost.

The meeting concluded at 9.03pm