

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 7 November 2016 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

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

COUNCILLORS: Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Cali, Caswell, Chunga, Culbard, Davenport, Duffy, G Eales, T Eales, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, J Hill, M Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Larratt, M Markham, B Markham, Marriott, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Aziz declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Motion i) as his daughter is a pharmacist.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the Council meetings held on the 19th September and the extraordinary Council meeting on the 3rd October 2016 were agreed.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received by Councillors McCutcheon, Eldred, Golby, Bottwood and Choudary.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor announced that he attended the annual celebration of Diwali, the Hindu festival of light, which was marked with a colourful procession and family friendly activities.

The Mayor reminded everyone that on Sunday 13th November at 09:30am Members were invited to attend the Remembrance Day Services at All Saints Church.

The Mayor informed Members that on Friday 25th November he would be holding his Charity Gala Dinner and noted that limited tickets were available should any Members wish to attend.

It was further noted that on Friday 18th November – the first ever International Men's Day would be held on Market Square and the following day would see Paralympic winner Ellie Robinson switching on the Christmas Lights also on the Market Square.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Andrew Stretton addressed Council and spoke of his frustration of living on a road that had not been adopted. He commented that he was required to pay his Council Tax but that did not receive the same service as those living on adopted roads. He asked that the Borough Council put pressure on the County Council and the Highways to resolve the problem.

Mr Arthur Newbury, as the Chair of St David's Community Association, addressed Council and stated that the reduction in litter bins around the shops had significantly decreased and had as a result increased the amount of litter on the streets. He further noted that the potential closure of the Drayton Centre would have ramifications for those who used it and asked the Council to give consideration to the services it provides.

Mr Steve Miller spoke as a member of the Green Party and stated that a recent Government report had highlighted the increase in the number of deaths from respiratory problems. He stated that the public consultation for the Northgate Bus Station had been very underwhelming and reported that a recent air quality test undertaken had shown unacceptable level of pollution due to emissions and asked that an Air Quality Management Area be established.

Mr Phil Leach stated that he had addressed Council on a number of occasions in recent months urging the Council to sell the NH1 number plate and urged them to support the motion on the agenda, stating that the funds from the sale could be invested in the 'Shopmobility' service.

Mr Hufferdine-Smith stated that the previous night had been the coldest so far in the year and asked if the Council were ready to support homeless people. He questioned the Council statistics on the number of rough sleepers and asked whether they could recognise the totality of the homelessness problem. He commended the fact that the Nightshelter would be opening imminently but questioned whether there were not enough beds to cater for those most vulnerable.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor advised that 26 questions had been received from Councillors and members of the public and that the answers had been table in accordance with the constitution.

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

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 1, Councillor Hallam in the absence of Councillor Bottwood, stated that all information contained within the Cabinet report was recently considered contained all information relating to the additional loan agreed under delegated powers.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 2, Councillor Hallam in

the absence of Councillor Bottwood, stated that he believed Councillor Bottwood would confirm that the land at Southfields would be recognised as a park and would inform the relevant people at the residents association.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 3, Councillor Hallam in the absence of Councillor Bottwood, commented that there was a specific premises that had been responsible for a large amount commercial waste, but that there were now new managers who have agreed to improve the affected area.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 12, Councillor Hallam in the absence of Councillor Bottwood commented that there was not the budget for facilities but offered to work with Councillor Davenport in order to address some of her concerns.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 13, Councillor Hallam in the absence of Councillor Bottwood commented that it would be very difficult for the suction machine to be used in another ward as the town centre was a priority due to the amount of cleanliness issues.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 15, Councillor Nunn commented that there was an ongoing review of the money available to tackle fly-tipping.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 16, Councillor Nunn stated that he had recently asked the County Council for a list of unadopted roads and reported that the administration would speak to both the developers and the County Council in order to try and resolve the unadopted roads issue.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 22, Councillor Nunn informed Councillor Stone that officers were not required to declare whether they were freemasons.

In response to a supplementary question relating to question 24, Councillor Nunn commented that he was aware that the County Council Scrutiny Committee would be making recommendations on the budget proposals.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

The acting Leader of the Council submitted his Cabinet Member report. He thanked the previous Leader for her work and paid tribute to the commitment and dedication she had shown in her previous position. He elaborated on the report and stated that the work with the Emergency Nightshelter was forging ahead and that waste contact services were soon to be considered by Cabinet. He further reported that he had attended a Councillor Development briefing on Treasury Management and that he had participated in a number of other activities including a Dementia Walk, Northampton Partnership Homes AGM and attended the Community Foundation Awards.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Nunn confirmed that he supported the Thorplands 81 team in Round Spinney and noted the shortage of football pitches.

Responding to further questions, Councillor Nunn stated that a Cabinet Advisory Group had been established and attended by cross party members to discuss progress of waste management and reported that the contract would be open to scrutiny emphasising the need to get the Council and residents the best service. Responding to a further question, the acting leader confirmed that he would support Northampton Partnership Homes submitted a report on the building of the new Council homes and expressed his commitment to delivering the new houses.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. He thanked the previous Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning who had recently retired and left the authority and noted the work that had been undertaken whilst he had been in position.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland commented that there had been some activity on the Churches site in St David's which would prove to be beneficial to the Town. In response to concerns raised about unadopted roads, he reported that developers were not compelled to adopt roads but stated that he would explore the issues with the county Council in order to try and resolve the problems. He further confirmed that he was not aware of the final figures of the costs of the work carried out on St Giles street and confirmed that the funding came from the capital programme. He also reported that work had been carried out in Far Cotton to ensure that the Council's HIMO's policy was credible and that a town wide survey was being carried out to assess any shortcomings of the policy.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and congratulated the Nightshelter Project Manager for his work and also offered his further thanks to people offering to volunteer. He stated that there was a need to distinguish between rough sleepers and homelessness as the needs of both groups were not the same and should be dealt with separately. It was noted that those volunteers would be vetted prior to any work carried out, to ensure that those considered to be most vulnerable would be protected and also noted the appointment of 2 full time staff members for the Nightshelter.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hibbert explained that the business case for the Social Lettings Agency had yet to be finalised. He responded to a further question by reporting that should people find themselves in a vulnerable financial position with regards to their housing, they should firstly contact the Housing Options team before a situation escalates. He answered a further question by noting that improvements would be made to the Eastern part of the town would be carried out over the next 10 years.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet member report and elaborated thereon. He stated that there had been a 'Killing with Kindness' event carried out in partnership with Northamptonshire Police and stated that whilst people were tempted to give money to people on the street, they should direct their donation to a recognised charity to ensure that the money would not be spent on illicit drugs and on alcohol. Councillor Hallam further noted that a study was being undertaken to look at the roles of PCSOs and Wardens that would explore combining the roles, which had already been piloted in Blackpool.

At this juncture of the meeting, the Mayor expressed that time restraints had drawn Cabinet Member Presentations to a close.

8. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP

Councillor Lane announced that Councillor Nunn had been appointed Leader of the Conservative Group and Councillor Larratt had been appointed Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group.

9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Larratt proposed and Councillor Patel seconded: That Councillor Nunn be elected Leader of the Council to hold office until the day of the post-election Annual Council Meeting which follows Councillor Nunn’s election today, unless before this date he resigns from office, he ceases to be a Councillor or he is removed from office by resolution of the Council”.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Nunn be elected Leader of the Council.

10. DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET

The Leader of the Council announced the following appointments:

Councillor Larratt	Deputy Leader of the Council
Councillor Hallam	Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor Hibbert	Cabinet Member for Housing & Wellbeing
Councillor King	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Safety
Councillor Hadland	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
Councillor Eldred	Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor Ansell	Assistant Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor J Hill	Assistant Cabinet member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

11. CHANGES TO APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor Nunn proposed a report that set out the changes to the appointments to Committees.

Councillor Patel seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Committees as set out in the report, be confirmed.

12. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Patel proposed a report that set out the appointments to Outside Bodies. It was noted that an amended version had been circulated and tabled prior to the meeting, which would be available on an updated agenda published on the Council's website.

Councillor Larratt seconded the amended the report.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Outside Bodies as set out in the amended report, be confirmed.

13. CONSULTATION APPOINTMENTS

Councillor Patel announced the appointment to the following Consultation Appointments and clarified that the CEFAP Panel was as follows and not as published on the agenda:

Councillor Larratt seconded the appointments.

Civic Matters (Chief Executive)

The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, The Immediate Past Mayor, the Leader and Councillor McCutcheon.

Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel (Chief Executive):

Councillors Flavell (Chair) and Councillors Kilbride, Sargeant, Birch and Cali

Constitution Review Working Party (Borough Solicitor)

Councillors Larratt (Chair) Oldham, Culbard, Russell and Beardsworth

Markets Advisory Panel

Councillor Larratt, Hadland and G Eales

Northamptonshire Police and Crime Panel

Councillor King (Cllr Larratt – Substitute)

Councillor Stone (Cllr Birch - Substitute)

Discretionary Housing Payments Review Panel (Chief Executive)

Councillor Eldred and Hibbert

Councillor Ashraf and Davenport

Councillor Beardsworth

14. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Ashraf stated that the number of Council houses available to people had fallen and that whilst Housing Associations were intended to partly close the gap this

had not always been evident and that there had been an increase in the number of people who had no other option other than to move into unsuitable private sector housing. She noted that it was recognised that moving house was one of the most stressful events people would experience and this affected both parents and children, especially those who were forced into poverty trap and that there were numerous instances where families were having to house share with people, who were often strangers, and voiced concerns that this could present problems with safeguarding issues. Councillor Ashraf stated that overcrowding in homes often impacted on the social wellbeing of children as they found themselves unable to do their homework due to a lack of space and limited places for them to play both indoors and outdoors and would feel unable to invite friends over. She questioned where the promised new build Council houses were, when the Social Lettings Agency was and when Northampton was going to be place where peoples housing needs would be met.

Councillor Hibbert, in response stated that the progress of the Social Lettings Agency had already been noted; he accepted that health and wellbeing was impacted upon when there was bad housing and moving was very disruptive. He further stated that the Council had specifically helped vulnerably housed 16 and 17 year olds and that housing protocols had been set up to ensure and promote early intervention. He further reported that the Government had already taken action by investing £500 million in the housing shortage problem.

Councillor Ashraf responded by explaining that the demand for housing was in some instances becoming a survival issue and stated that there was a need to remember and consider the children that are living in undesirable housing and commented that those children needed to have a voice and to be listened to.

15. SPECIAL URGENCY - CABINET REPORT ON NIGHTSHELTER

Councillor Hibbert submitted a report to note that Cabinet had made an Executive decision on the 19th October 2016 pursuant of the special urgency provision which is required to be reported to Council.

Councillor Nunn seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

16. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2015-16

Councillor Nunn submitted a report that sought Council to note the treasury management performance for 2015-16 and treasury management data.

Councillor Patel seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the treasury management performance for 2015-16 (outturn) and treasury management data for quarter 1 of 2016-17.

17. NOTICES OF MOTION

- i) Councillor B Markham proposed and Councillor Beardsworth to seconded.

“The Council recognises the value of community pharmacies as an important primary healthcare service and the role they play in our local community. Our local pharmacies offer a range of services not only dispensing prescriptions but promoting health and well-being providing advice such as on smoking cessation, flu vaccination and sexual health.

Pharmacies provide help and advice from pre-natal care to support for and advice services to elderly care homes.

This Council is greatly concerned about Central Government cuts to pharmacy support of 12% from December 2016 with a further reduction of 6% in 2017. This could lead to the loss of up to a quarter of our local chemist shops in particular from secondary shopping areas such as Kingsthorpe Front, Wellingborough Road and St James Square.

Service cuts to community pharmacies will put residents at risk and increase pressure on already stretched GPs and A&E Departments leading to an increase in NHS costs.

Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Health, NHS England and to our 3 local Members of Parliament calling for an immediate review of the proposed cut to funding for this vital local service’.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

Mr Phil Leached addressed Motion ii) and stated that he welcomed the motion and stated that the Council should sell the number plate and the car invest the money from the proceeds in ‘Shopmobility’.

Mr Arthur Newbury stated that he was not in favour of the motion as he considered it to be important to retain the heritage of the town and as the number plate was gifted to the Council, it should be kept as it had cost people nothing.

- ii) Councillor G Eales to propose and Councillor Gowen to second:

“This council agrees to undertake a review and independent valuation(s) of the Mayoral car's NH1 registration. This process will assist council / cabinet in making an informed decision whether to retain or dispose of this asset subject to a form of public consultation or gauging of public opinion.

Council notes the need for Northampton to improve its air quality and reduce CO2 emissions, with that in mind and to be setting the right example, at the appropriate & viable time in the future, the first citizen's vehicle should be considered to be replaced with a fully electric car.

Out of respect for the incumbent Mayor, no action will be taken on the above until the end of the current mayoralty, but the review process can operate in the background”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

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

“This Council notes that loan sharks and aggressive pay day loan companies charge exorbitant interest rates. We note the difficulties this often poses to our disadvantaged communities who need to take out loans.

We acknowledge the excellent work of the Credit Union in the One Stop Shop helping people who struggle to budget, save and get affordable loans.

This Council agrees to work with Northamptonshire Credit Union to create locality access for residents who cannot afford to travel to the Guildhall. Everyone should be able to access this excellent scheme.

This Council further agrees to promote the Credit Union in its literature when and wherever it is appropriate to do so”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Motion iv) was withdrawn in accordance with the guidance in the Constitution.

iv) Councillor Duffy to propose and Councillor Birch to second:

“This Council believes it is regrettable that the Thorplands community shop was closed without consultation with the local community.

This Council understands the importance of community amenities. Community amenities help provide much needed local services and support willing and local volunteers who want to support their communities.

This Council understands that the infrastructure for maintaining a community amenity and volunteer support for local communities needs the support of community development staff.

Therefore this Council resolves to do all it can to bring the shop back into community use”.

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

There were no matters of urgency.

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm