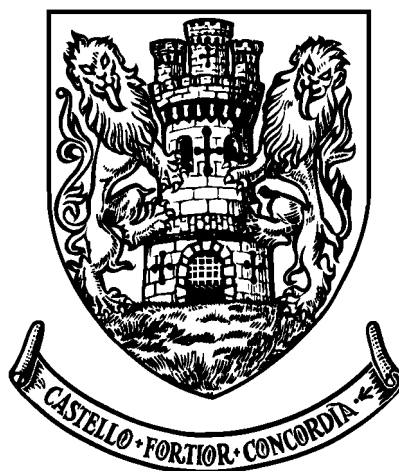


NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 12 December 2016

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2016 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 7th November 2016.

3. APOLOGIES.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

(Copy herewith)

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Birch to make a statement on 'Culture as a driver for change'

9. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

(Copy herewith)

10. REMUNERATION OF THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING

(Copy herewith)

11. EXTERNAL AUDIT CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

(Copy herewith)

12. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE PLACES

(Copy herewith)

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

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

This Council is concerned about the problems arising from traffic congestion in the Town Centre and in particular in The Drapery and surrounding streets since the opening of the Northgate Bus Station and the re-introduction of stops into the Drapery. The local newspaper has highlighted problems caused by grid-lock in The Drapery and our own air quality monitoring has raised concerns for public health.

With regeneration of the Greyfriars area due to begin next year, we call on this Council along with County Highways to carry out a review of traffic movements in and out of Sheep Street and Drapery area of the town aimed at reducing bottle-necks, improving air quality and enforcing traffic orders.

This should be the first stage of a comprehensive study of access and traffic movements within the A5123 inner ring-road.

ii) Councillor Haque to propose and Councillor Ashraf to second:

This Council notes we have a serious issue in this town with air pollution. However, testing for air quality is restricted to 7 areas. We understand that there is a scrutiny group looking at this issue and that is very welcome.

One action we can take in the meantime is the enforcement of section 42 of the road traffic act 1988. The act enforces rule 123 of the Highway Code which states, "You must not leave your vehicle engine running unnecessarily while that vehicle is stationary on a public road."

To keep a taxi, bus, commercial vehicle or a car idling is against the law and can incur fines of up to £20 or £40 if not paid with a timeframe.

Enforcement of this law will help reduce pollution at key points of the town.

This Council therefore agrees to develop an enforcement strategy with immediate effect.

iii) Councillor Marriott to propose and Councillor Chunga to second:

This Council notes that the Equality Act provides protections against discriminatory

treatment based on the concept of 'Protected Characteristics.'

Currently workers with a terminal illness are not classified as having a Protected Characteristic and therefore have very limited legal protection against employers dismissing them due to illness.

This Council further notes that employers are therefore free to dismiss terminally ill workers once they have made 'reasonable adjustments' to the employee's job to assist with the illness. Council agrees that the last thing a terminally ill worker would need is the distress at the same time as facing up to a terminal illness is to have to fight for the right to continue working and not to face the indignity of being sacked.

In addition Council notes that the loss of death in service benefits to terminally ill workers sacked before death is a further distress at a time when security for a family for the future should be protected.

Therefore this Council agrees to support the TUC's 'Dying to Work Campaign' currently being developed in the Midlands and to support the lobbying of MP's to establish new legislation, currently being drawn up by the society of Labour Lawyers which;

- * Seeks to get terminally ill workers covered by Protective Rights at Work in line with those covered by Pregnancy / Maternity Rights.
- * Seeks to protect death in service benefits.
- * Seeks to allow workers with terminal illness to die in dignity.

iv) Councillor Hallam to propose and Councillor King to second:

This Council recognizes the frustration of local residents, when pieces of play equipment are damaged and then removed as opposed to being repaired. Council therefore resolves to adopt a new policy that play equipment will be repaired and replaced, as opposed to being removed when damaged and will formalize a budget for this as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process.

Council also recognizes the valuable contribution that play equipment can make to local communities and resolves to continue its work with Parish Council's, Residents Association's and Friends of Parks Groups to continue to identify funding for potential new schemes to bring additional play equipment to our local areas.

14. 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 or by seeking advice using the contact details below.

3. Motions

- 3.1 A member of the public may register to speak to a motion under the 'Notices of Motion' item on the agenda. Registration to speak must be made to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the day to the meeting. Speaking to a motion is restricted to three minutes per person.

(The 'Notices of Motion' item will not be taken at the Annual Council meeting or meetings called for civic or ceremonial purposes.)

4. General

A member of the public may make a comment, present a petition, ask a question or speak to a motion at the same meeting subject to the restrictions set out above.

5. Contacts

Democratic Services: e-mail democraticservices@northampton.gov.uk

Tel 01604 837722

Mail Democratic Services
Northampton Borough Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton NN1 1DE

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 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 on 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 the 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 a 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 a place where people's 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

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 1

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr B Markham:

For a number of years local residents, solicitors, services such as estate agents and Councillors have been able to view planning applications and supporting documents on the NBC website. This process was relatively easy; all you needed was an address or post code or ward name or combination of these enabling a search for the planning application number. Following an 'upgrade' several months ago the search facility has not worked properly and now users can only find details in the already know the applications number. This greatly reduces the usability of the site. A fix for this was promised 'by October'.

Can the Cabinet member tell me when he expected the previous level of service to be restored?

Response

Since the new system was installed, there have been a number of technical issues which needed to be resolved before the software supplier could go ahead and install the new website software. These issues have taken longer than initially expected to be resolved, with officers spending a considerable amount of time to ensure that the final product is fit for purpose and works correctly. I'm pleased to report that these have now all been resolved.

The installation of the new website software was scheduled for the 29th & 30th November. Following installation, officers will be receiving dedicated training on the new software during w/c 5th December. Once training has been completed, the process of 'building' the new system will start. The timetable is for this to be completed by late December and testing taking place in the New Year. Providing all tests are completed satisfactorily, the new public facing web pages are expected to be online on the NBC website before the end of January 2017. When this is live the ability to search planning applications will be greatly improved.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 2

Question to Cllr Hibbert from Mr Adams:

Now that the government have confirmed that they have scrapped the mandatory requirement on Councils for Pay to Stay can you confirm that NBC will scrap any plans to apply it?

Response

Although the Government has recently announced that it is no longer planning to introduce an income based rents policy that compels local authorities to set higher rents for higher income council tenants, it remains committed to ensuring that social housing is occupied by those who need it most.

This is why the Government is introducing the mandatory use of fixed term tenancies for new tenants in local authority housing. At the end of each fixed term, councils will review the tenants' circumstances to ensure that they still need social housing.

The Government has said that its guidance to councils will make it clear that councils should take into account a household's financial circumstances when allocating or renewing tenancies and that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, tenancies should be targeted at those on lower incomes. It has also said it will "consider whether other options exist to ensure that high income tenants in social housing make a greater contribution to costs".

When the Government issues its guidance, the Council will assess the financial implications of that guidance and make a decision on whether or not to set higher rents for higher income tenants.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 3

Question to Cllr Hibbert from Cllr B Markham:

In the bidding week commencing Wednesday 30th November 2016, once again, there were no bedroom homes for housing applicants to bid for.

In the last 12 months how often has this been the situation and out of the 4,000 on our waiting lists how many applicants are looking for 3 or more bedrooms?

Response

In the last 12 months, there were 6 occasions when the weekly bidding cycle did not include any family homes with 3 or more bedrooms.

I can confirm that there are currently 373 applicants on Northampton's Housing Register seeking a home with 3 or more bedrooms.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 4

Question to Cllr King from Cllr Birch:

It was reported at one time that there was full CCTV coverage of town centre. Can you confirm that this is still the case as the festive season is upon us and the public's personal safety should not be compromised at this busy time?

Response

I confirm that there is good coverage of the town centre by CCTV.

Councillor Anna King
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 5

Question to Cllr King from Cllr Birch:

Cycling on pavements pose a real hazard to both pedestrians and cyclists alike. Also many cyclists do not have lights on their bikes or wear high-vis. clothing. The new street lights cast deep shadows and cyclist are often invisible to motorists until the last minute. This is potentially extremely dangerous and a campaign on 'Safe Cycling' would be timely. Are there any statistics on cycling accidents?

Response

Such statistics are not kept by NBC. I suggest you approach the county council or the police to see what information they hold.

Councillor Anna King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 6

Question to Cllr Hallam from Cllr Davenport:

You announced recently that play equipment would be replaced when beyond repair. What budget has been agreed to replace the old equipment with new?

Response

At my instruction, officers are in the process of developing a play equipment strategy which will inform the development of necessary capital and revenue budgets to ensure the sustainable provision of play equipment in Northampton for the next 10 years and beyond. Clearly this is an area worthy of the substantial investment that I know will be required. I will make a more detailed announcement in due course.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 7

Question to Cllr Hallam from Cllr Davenport:

What will happen to seating, bins, fences & toilets when they need replacing - is there a budget for those?

Response

The replacement of equipment for parks and open spaces is met from the parks and open spaces block of the capital programme. This pot contained £250,000 this year and it is proposed that funding is maintained at this level in future years.

Councillor Mike Hallam

Cabinet Member for Environment

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 8

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Davenport:

We have massive problems all over town concerning the safety of our children around schools due to dangerous parking and speeding by parents and residents. The NCC seem unable/unwilling to help, the Police have given powers to the NCC so will not help, there is an ingrained complacency about this problem, even in Planning, where it is said, 'it is like that all over the town' so they grant planning permission even when the infrastructure cannot cope. Can we at the NBC get a campaign together to raise awareness to this growing problem? Parents/residents are fed up with this.

Response

When making decisions on planning applications, the Planning Committee attach's significant weight to professional advice, including that given by the County Council as Highway Authority. The County Council is also a statutory consultee on planning matters. Where significant highway impacts are identified which cannot be mitigated, proposals can be refused on the grounds that fail to comply with national and local policy. However, such refusals need to be supported by technical evidence in order to be capable of being supported at appeal.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 9

Question to Cllr Hallam from Cllr Haque:

The state of our "gate ways" into Northampton are important as they give the critical first impression to visitors and potential investors. At times they look untidy, so what can you do to improve them?

Response

I agree that gateways are of great importance and tend to be more of a challenge than other areas because responsibility sometime falls to a number of agencies. Also there are difficulties with cleaning and maintaining open space around high speed routes. I ensure that the NBC responsibilities are properly addressed and I also liaise with colleagues at NCC to try to ensure they do the same. From time there is also engagement with the Highways Agency.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment

Question for Full Council Monday 12th December, 2016

Question 10

Question to Cllr Hadland from Cllr Duffy:

My concern is the inadequacy of bus station to cope with number of buses using it and the traffic congestion this causes. Timetable delays are also caused, leaving long queues of passengers waiting at bus stops for up to an hour in the freezing cold. The congestion also leads to idling vehicles spewing out noxious fumes adding to the illegal level of pollution in Northampton. What proposals for improvement are there please?

Response

The Borough Council is not the Highways Authority, however are currently looking at options to enhance the public realm of the town centre; these plans may include additional bus stops. All plans will be discussed with the Highways Authority and the bus companies.

Councillor Tim Hadland

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 12th December 2016

Internal Auditors Report into the Football Club Loan

The findings of the Internal Auditors Report showed extremely serious shortcomings in the way that the council assessed, granted, and monitored the loan to NTFC. Having recently taken over as Leader, I apologise unreservedly to every resident of the town for the significant number of errors made at all stages of this transaction. I can assure taxpayers that every one of the issues identified by the Auditors is being, or already has been, the subject of action to ensure that such a series of shortcomings in vital processes cannot ever be allowed to happen again.

Since becoming Leader, I have found some reassurance through seeing the process improvements that have already been made since the failure of the loan, and that the Chief Executive and Senior team are acutely aware of the importance of thorough, diligent processes across all transactions and decisions within the council. I have made it clear that I am looking to them to ensure further improvement and the implementation of every Auditors recommendation, to ensure correctness of all our processes, and for the implementation of the comprehensive Governance Action Plan that we are working to. This Action Plan is the subject of daily discussion between the Chief Executive, Senior Team, and myself, reflecting the fact that this is of the very highest priority. The Governance Action Plan will carry the weight of being one of the council's most important plans, and will ensure compliance to good management on projects and activities, however large or small, backed up by rigorous checking and compliance monitoring to ensure that it is followed, without fail.

You will receive regular updates on the implementation of the Governance Action Plan, and the Audit Committee has been asked to monitor it through reports to every one of its meetings.

Transformation Programme

Compliance and diligence must also become a part of the 'culture' of the council, and as part of the drive to make the council a modern organisation that serves the town through the highest possible standards, I was delighted to be involved in the launch of the Council's Transformation Programme. Conceived and begun by my predecessor, Cllr Mary Markham, in conjunction with the Chief Executive, this programme recognises that the most effective and efficient service will be delivered through staff that feel they have a say in improving service delivery, and that their efforts and successes are recognised.

Unitary Status

I recently updated the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this issue, which remains on the national agenda, and advised them that we had hosted a meeting at

the Guildhall of the Leaders and Chief Executives from the seven District and Borough Councils across the county, followed by a meeting on this with the County Council. There remain some differences between councils' enthusiasm to pursue Unitary Status, and also differences in the Unitary model that would be preferred. Whilst the County Council's Network has produced a report focusing on the benefits of a county-wide unitary approach, I am aware of the widespread, cross-party view amongst Northampton Councillors that Unitary would bring both savings and service improvements on a more local basis. The District Council's Network has reported that more localised Unitary Councils are better able to represent their communities, and have a greater focus on services and 'place', rather than larger administrative county area Unitaries.

I anticipate that the commissioning of a formal piece of independent analysis will progress in the near future, to help identify the challenges and opportunities that Unitary could bring our town, but there are two key points that I would mention at this stage. Firstly, it is essential that any Unitary council arrangement ensures that we are fairly and adequately enabled to fund the very large and increasing social care services costs that we might be required to deliver to our residents. Secondly, I am aware of the popularity of the concept of a Unitary Northampton with an enlarged boundary, and agree with the strong rationale supporting this approach. However, it must be noted that the Government is currently only seeking Unitary proposals from areas where all councils involved agree on the proposal, and therefore that agreement would need to be reached with our neighbouring councils for boundaries to be extended.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council



Report of the Deputy Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

12th December 2016

Since becoming Deputy Leader of the Council, I have been supporting the Leader and Cabinet colleagues across a variety of areas within the council, and can report on some of my specific responsibilities as below.

Market

Our historic market is one of Northampton's great assets. It remains a priority. The market must be a vibrant trading area providing a good and diverse retail offer to the citizens of the town and beyond.

I recently attended my first meeting of the Market Advisory Group. While I appreciate the value of such forums, they must be representative. I was very disappointed that few Market Traders were present at the meeting. We must engage with the traders in order to develop the market so that it is the vibrant place we all want it to be. I am therefore currently meeting with traders and officers to discuss how to best to engage and work with traders in order to improve dialogue and move forward positively.

I have learned that it is a difficult time for Market Traders, and there is much uncertainty over the future. For the traders to be successful and to continue trading for the benefit of customers we need to maintain our support and investment in the facility. A new cleaning machine has recently been purchased that will deep clean the surface and other assets improving the environment. New stall covers are due to be provided in the New Year. Consideration is also being given to re-configuring the stalls in order to improve permeability and provide better stall frontages.

Events remain an important feature on the market in order to attract visitors and I would like to thank my colleague Councillor King for recent events, and Christmas activities on the Square.

Councillor Training

I attended my first meeting of the Councillor Development Group on 24th October. Through the Group and following suggestions from individual Members, the following events have been arranged:

- **07/12/16** - Licencing Committee Training on Hackney and Private Hire Licencing
- **Mid-January** - Licencing Committee Training on Liquor Licencing
- **30/01/17** – VOICE Northamptonshire will make a presentation on their work that is open to all Councillors. Two sessions one at 2.00 pm and another at 6.00 pm
- **06/02/17** – Lone Working System to be delivered by Louise Musson. Two one hour sessions, one at 2.00 pm an another at 6.00 pm
- **16/02/17** – Local Plan Briefing open to all Councillors to be delivered by Peter Baguley. One session, 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm
- **22/02/17** – Overview & Scrutiny Training for Scrutiny Committee Members. Provided by an external training provider. One session 6.00 pm to 8.30 pm
- **02/03/17** – Briefing open to all Councillors on Council Performance and Performance Reports delivered by Alice Turrell. Two sessions, 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm
- **22/03/17** – Briefing open to all Councillors on Urban Development delivered by John Dale and Peter Baguley. One session at 2.00 pm lasting all afternoon and will involve site visits by mini bus

- **03/04/17** – Chaining Skills Training open to all Councillors. Two sessions one in the afternoon, 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm and one in the evening, 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm. Provided by an external training provider
- **05/04/17** – Community Engagement Training open to all Councillors. One three hour session commencing at 5.00 pm. Provided by an external training provider
- **26/04/17** – Social Media Training open to all Councillors. Two sessions one at 2.00 pm and the other at 6.00 pm. Provided by an external training provider

Further details regarding these sessions can be obtained from Tracy Tiff.

These sessions have all been arranged at the request of Members, and I would welcome hearing ideas / proposals / needs from any Members regarding training.

Sports Clubs

I am currently making arrangements to meet with our valued professional sports clubs early in the New Year.

Scrutiny

Scrutiny plays an important role in the work of the Council and is valued. I am monitoring the progress of Scrutiny Reports and can confirm the Cabinet will consider its responses to outstanding reports as follows:

- Match Day Parking – February 2017
- NBC Owned Street Lighting – January 2017
- Impact of the effectiveness of the enforcement of Licensing Policies – Taxis and Private Hire – January / February 2017
- Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town – January /February 2017
- Heath Check of the Local Economy – December 2016

Street Lighting

I hope to Chair the Member / Officer Working Group continuing the work of the Scrutiny Group regarding NBC owned Street Lights if Cabinet accepts the recommendation of the Scrutiny Panel to establish the Group. This is an important matter and presents risks that we must address.

NCC is currently finalising its plans to install new street lighting within Northampton Town Centre. Concerns have been raised about the impact and appearance of new lighting columns in the major conservation area of the town centre around All Saints – Wood Hill, George Row and Mercers Row - as well as St Giles Square. Consequently I, along with our Planning Officer and Heritage Officer met with NCC / Balfour Beatty officers to discuss our concerns. They were very receptive. We are now working together to identify a sensible solution that ensures the new lighting sits well within this sensitive area without being obtrusive and adversely impacting on the listed building and structures in the locality. This includes a design and height of column that is appropriate to this heritage setting and that reflects the design of our own existing lights in the area.

Councillor Phil Larratt
Deputy Leader of the Council



Cabinet Member Report for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 12 December 2016

Town Centre

Parking

The overall parking figures for the period April – October saw 1,562,794 car park users, an increase of 66,275 (4.4%) on the same period last year.

The two hour free parking in the council's multi-storey car parks in the same period saw 595,148 customers taking advantage of the free parking, a year on year increase of 81,289 (15.8%).

The free Saturday parking offer in the council multi-storey car parks for the same period saw 255,276 customers take advantage of the free parking, up 37,446 (17.2%) on last year.

The reopened St Giles Street has been pressure washed to reveal the silver colour to match Guildhall Road. The next Phases are similar improvements currently being considered.

Footfall

Footfall in the town centre for October was 1,499,027, an increase of 65,579 (4.6%) on the same period last year.

Overall for the year (April – October), there is an increase of 585,724 (7.6%) compared with last year.

Planning

The Northampton Local Plan (Part 2)

The Options Consultation closed on 21 November. Approximately 50 respondents' submitted comments and all responses are currently being logged and assessed.

Kingsthorpe Conservation Areas

Both of the Conservation Areas in Kingsthorpe are currently being reviewed. Public consultation has now commenced and runs from 8 November to 20 December. All residents in the affected areas will receive a leaflet setting out the proposals. The Council has a statutory duty to review its conservation areas - Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Growing Together Neighbourhood Plan

The Examiners Report was received on 9 November 2016. The report and the next stages of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process including the Referendum will be considered by the Cabinet on 7 December 2016.

N/2015/1249 – The S106 agreement for the planning application to develop 64 dwellings at Ecton Brook Playing Fields was completed on 28th October and formal planning permission issued.

N/2016/0810 – An outline planning application for the development of 200 residential units at the University of Northampton Avenue Campus has been received.

The public inquiry for the Milton Ham appeal will commence on 29th November and is expected to last for 3 days.

Regeneration and Assets

Delapre Abbey

The works to extend the Car Park is scheduled to be completed in early 2017, in time for the opening in the Spring.

As the construction project nears its conclusion, a number of issues have come to light which will affect the total cost and the timetable for opening. Cabinet is considering the issues, which include a delay caused by the requirement to lay new gas and electricity mains to the Abbey. We will receive the Abbey from the contractors early in the New Year, in time for DAPT to complete the fit-out, Interpretation and training for an Easter opening. DAPT has been particularly successful in recruiting and training volunteers in recent months, which is a measure of the excitement that is building to be part of the Town's premier heritage project.

Vulcan Works

The Planning Application for the main project, a partnership between the Council and the University, has been submitted
Wates are the appointed contractor and they are pricing the works
The works will include the demolition of the former amalgamated tyres site, to be replaced with a new build office block.

Rail Station Multi-Storey Car Park

Preparatory work is continuing with Network Rail and the Department for Transport

Bellinge Depot – proposed temporary school

We have conducted extensive discussions with the tenant, an educational trust, concerning building work and planning permission for a temporary educational facility. These have been successfully concluded and following consultation with residents a planning application has now been made.

Sale of Land at Blackthorn Local Centre

A planning application was submitted by Blackthorn Health Care Ltd for a pharmacy relocating from the local supermarket. In response to objections received from residents and the police we have proposed a replacement site in an end terrace unit of a local retail parade and are completing negotiations.

Land at Crow Lane - Sale of Land

Following extensive negotiations for the sale of the above land, all matters have now been agreed and exchange of contracts is expected imminently. This will facilitate the expansion of a manufacturing company that relocated to Northampton.

Main Road - rent review

We have successfully conducted a review of the rent for an industrial property in Main Road. After extensive negotiations we have been successful in securing a 50% increase on the previous rental level. This reflects the strong local market for such premises.

72 St. Giles Street (Former "C'est La Vie")

The lease to the new tenant Barbarella Hair Limited has been completed and the new tenant who is moving from a smaller unit at No. 21 St. Giles Street is currently undertaking fitting out works. We wish them every success in their new premises.

Danes Camp Lift upgrade.

We have recently completed to upgrade the passenger lift at Danes Camp. The work was completed on time and within budget and will provide increased reliability, reduced running costs, higher speed, and improved ride quality.

Councillor Tim Hadland
Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 12th December 2016

Finance

Autumn Statement

The Autumn Statement was published by the Government on 23 November. This included a number of announcements that could affect local government, particularly in relation to regeneration, growth and housing. The impact of the announcement is being assessed to understand the opportunities and implications for the Council.

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is expected in the middle of December and is anticipated to confirm the Efficiency Plan and the updated New Homes Bonus scheme.

Efficiency Plan and Budget

The Council's Draft Budget proposals for 2017/18 and over the medium term will be considered at Cabinet on 14th December. These proposals build on the Efficiency Plan approved by Cabinet in September 2016.

Statement of Accounts 2016/17

Work has already commenced on improving the year end closedown process in advance of the producing the Statement of Accounts 2016/17. The improvements include continuing to accelerate the closedown process in advance of the Accounts sign off deadline moving forward by two months to end of July for the 2017/18 Accounts, reviewing internal processes and regular meetings with KPMG to manage these changes.

Revenues & Benefits

Customer Service

LGSS continue to build on improvement plans and performance within the Revenues and Benefits customer contact centre, resulting in a sustained increase on the call answer rate and customer satisfaction.

Housing Benefit

The service has delivered fantastic levels of performance within our Benefits service in terms of our response rate to benefit claims and support to the most vulnerable customers of the Borough with our Discretionary Housing Payment priority service. In addition to this our accuracy levels remain well within the subsidy thresholds which supports both the council in terms of subsidy and the customer in receiving the right benefit at the right time.

The Fraud & Error Reduction incentive Scheme (FERIS) has now gone live with a 12 month programme of reviews planned to help the borough further reduce the level of fraud and error within the Benefits system.

Welfare Reform

The welfare reform steering group (NBC / LGSS & NPH) have been working closely with the DWP in preparation for the next phase of Benefit Caps came into effect 7th November 2016 to ensure we can support our customers in the best possible way during this welfare change.

Business Rates (NNDR) Revaluation 2017

The Valuation Office, who are part the Inland Revenue, have recently issued a draft valuation list for all NNDR properties, which will take effect from the 1st April 2017. The full list will be issued in December 2016. Whilst nationally this process is expected to be fiscally neutral, at a local level this will impact on the Council financially in terms of running costs. There may also be an impact on core funding, however the final details have not been released by Central Government yet. The Revenues & Benefits and Finance teams are currently assessing the potential impacts to inform the budget setting process.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance



Cabinet Member Report for Environment

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 12 December 2016

Environmental Health

The responses to the consultation on the Low Emissions Strategy are currently being evaluated and work is being progressed working together with the Scrutiny Panel to develop an action plan to implement the strategy.

Environmental Services

The winter shrub maintenance has now started and will continue until March 2017.

A number of new locations have been identified for additional litterbins within the Town Centre. The new litterbins have cigarette stubbing ashtrays on the top to help reduce the amount of butts that are being discarded onto the footpath.

The litterbins are being installed in three phases. The first phase is in The Drapery by the bus shelters. The second phase is in Abington Street, especially on the pedestrianised area. And finally, phase three is to replace the old stainless steel litterbins in Gold Street, as the ashtrays on those litterbins have been broken and the cigarette butts fall through the litterbin and onto the footpath. It is hoped that with the addition of the new litterbins, the issue with discarded cigarette butts will greatly improve.

Work on the Commissioning Options Review has now been completed. Following a report to Cabinet on 16th November, Cabinet made a decision to contract out Environmental Services when the current contract with Enterprise/Amey comes to an end in June 2018, which was subsequently discussed at the Overview & Scrutiny call-in held on 29th November.

Christmas Recycling

Waste and recycling collections will continue as usual, with the exception of brown bin collections, which will be suspended between 26 December and 7 January to allow for extra recycling to be collected. This will include the collection of any recycling items that won't fit into your boxes. These items should be sorted into different waste streams and put into separate clear or white plastic bags placed next to your boxes. Large cardboard, if flattened and placed with your recycling boxes, will also be collected during the two week period starting on 26 December.

Real Christmas trees will be collected on the scheduled brown bin collection day, or scheduled bin bag collection day, from 8 January for a four-week period. After this period please take any trees to the local Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Full details of waste and recycling collections from November 2016 to June 2018, were sent to house-holds mid-October, in the form of a calendar. Anyone unsure of their collection dates, can look them up at www.northampton.gov.uk/recycling

Play Equipment Policy

At the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on Monday 28th November, I announced the reversal of the Council's previous policy on damaged play equipment that has been completely removed. From now on, the Council will replace any equipment that was previously deemed beyond repair and completely removed. The budget for this has been identified and will be finalised as part of the 2017/2018 Budget Process.

A number of replacement items of play equipment have already been replaced/ordered for the following Parks and Open Spaces:-

- The Racecourse
- Abington Park
- Parklands Open Space
- Eastfield Park
- Rectory Farm Pocket Park

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement & Community Safety

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 12 December 2016

National Hate Crime Award

Northampton Borough Council scooped a national award for the work it does with diverse communities across the town at the Hate Crime Awards on Thursday 17 November.

The Borough Council beat off stiff competition from Manchester City Council to be presented with the “2016 Local Council Service Upstander Award” by Lord Bourne, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Department for Communities and Local Government, during a ceremony that honoured and celebrated people in society who challenge intolerance.

Northampton Borough Council won the award in recognition of the way it works with communities within the town, including the development of six community forums and the delivery of events in support of national awareness campaigns including International Men’s Day, Hate Crime Week, International Day for persons with a Disability and commemorative days such as Holocaust Memorial Day and Srebrenica Memorial Day.

Councillor Community Fund

Since the beginning of April 2016, 177 Projects, totalling £76,609.42 have been supported through the Cllr Community Fund.

Partnership Support

The process for 2017-18 will run from January–April 2017. Applications will be able to be submitted from Tuesday 3rd January 2017. We will be holding a showcase event on Monday 16th January 2017, this will be similar to the event we did last year, an opportunity for the organisations we funded for 2016-17 to showcase what they have been delivering, 6 months into the grant. We will also incorporate the training into the event for the partnership grant process, for organisations that are looking to apply for 2017-18.

Community Centres

Volunteers being utilised to support the improvement of the Community Centres:

- St Andrews – decorated Briar Hill Community Centre – October 2016
- Olympus Care – gardening project at Parklands Community Centre – October 2016
- Nationwide – decorated Far Cotton Community Centre – November 2016

Forums

Northampton Borough Council was shortlisted, after an application was submitted to the National Hate Crime Awards 2016; the application detailed all the good work that is being delivered through the forums, including events such as Hate Crime Awareness Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, Srebrenica etc.

International Men’s Day was held on Friday 18th November in the Market Square. Men came along for a free health check, given by the Leisure Trust. Information was provided by Lowdown, First for Wellbeing, Changing Minds, BST Gyms, Men in Sheds and Aquarius. Free give-aways were provided by Carlsberg (alcohol free) and Lush. Lowdown encouraged

men to sit on the sofa, for a chat and a coffee. The Cobblers offered football sessions and we had performances by the Northampton Male Voice Choir.

A civic ceremony was held in the Courtyard on Thursday 1st December to mark World Aids Day.

International Day for Persons with Disabilities was celebrated on Saturday 3rd December. Information on services that are available in the Town for people with a disability were present during the event, which was held between 11-3pm at Weston Favell Shopping Centre.

Events

This year's Christmas Light Switch-On on the Market Square attracted thousands of visitors into the town who enjoyed the day's entertainment and the switch-on delivered by Ellie Robinson the Gold Medal winner and this year's Paralympics.

The Christmas Craft Den and Santa Grotto in Market Walk has been popular with families and the Christmas Coca-Cola Truck visit on Sunday 11th December in St Giles Square attracted many visitors.

This year's six 40 foot Christmas trees, 210 business Christmas trees and cross street Christmas lights have all added to the Christmas glow in the town centre.

The Christmas Frost Fairs on the 26th November and 4th December and Light Parade on the 4th December have all added to the council's Christmas offer.

The council is supporting the Chinese community to help deliver the 2017 Chinese New Year on Sunday February 5th.

Culture & Heritage

November saw the opening of an exhibition 'Experienced Hands – the Art of the Shoemaker'. Using the painting 'Experienced Hands' by artist Frederick Hall as a starting point, this exhibition investigates the tools and techniques of traditional shoemaking, using tools and objects from the Shoe Collection. Complementing the exhibition, visitors were able to discover the fascinating craft of hand shoemaking by watching a shoemaking demonstration with Peter Prince, an independent boot and shoe maker.

A writing workshop inspired by the museums' exhibits and collections took place in November. Led by members of the Museum Writers Group, the event was well attended.

The Over 60s talks in December was once again fully booked.

A Christmas workshop for children at Abington Park Museum in December attracted good numbers.

November saw over 45 stallholders hire space at the popular Christmas Fair in Abington Park Museum. Visitors were able to browse festive food & drink, gifts and crafts from local producers. The event attracted over 1,000 visitors and was a huge success.

A number of significant donations were donated to the museum: Works on paper: Manor Farm House by Richard Barnard, a photograph of the Queen visiting British Timken and several pairs of shoes by designers Gucci and Biba.

During December Northampton Museum & Art Gallery was hired by Character Wines for an invitation only wine tasting event and Borneo Martell Turner Coulston LLP Solicitors held a drinks reception for guests.

Customer Services

National Customer Services Week was a success with many events engaging staff and customers, these included service managers spending time shadowing front line services. The increased awareness of links have already improved some services. A partnership networking meeting was held this month with all the One Stop Shop Partners and a Service Improvement Panel consultation was held with tenants.

This year we celebrated our Service Champions; those that go above and beyond for our customers and our corporate service achievements with many awards being presented for the Extra Mile Individual and Extra Mile Team awards.

Customer Services had a successful first year review of their 5 year Customer Service Excellence accreditation. The assessor was really impressed with the increased Partnership working including the co-location of Citizens Advice and Community Law Service.

Community Safety

Overall crime continues to increase seeing an 8% (+1,208 crimes) since the beginning of April 2016. Serious Acquisitive Crime is showing an increase of 22.6% (+548 crimes) with vehicle crime rising by 30.5% (+413 crimes), domestic burglary by 12.9% (+98 crimes). The rate at which violence against the person is increasing continues to slow in comparison to 2015/16 with an increase of 4.9% (+159 crimes). Anti-Social Behaviour incidents reported to Police have increased by 8.8%. Environmental ASB reports have increased by 7.2% but this is now seeing a reduction on previous months. Personal ASB has increased by 2.2%, and nuisance ASB also by 13.5%. However, figures are still lower than the same period last year.

Public Spaces Protection Order is now finalised and agreed by Cabinet/Full Council. Work is underway on the signage and locations. Busking was removed from the draft 'Order' following the results of the public consultation. However, any busking deemed anti-social will be dealt with using other powers. It is anticipated that the PSPO will be in place by March 2017.

The multi-agency Weeks of Action continued with Semilong/Regent Square taking place in October. A range of environmental improvements were undertaken on Royal Terrace, Regent Street and Deal Street, resulting in a much improved and safer environment. The Weeks of Action programme continue to see great involvement and engagement from residents and a range of public and voluntary sector agencies. Planning is now underway for the next Week of Action being held in St David's in March 2017.

During National Domestic Abuse Week (w/c 25/11), performances of an awareness raising drama production 'Tough Love' was delivered in 3 senior schools in Northampton. These sessions were supported by officers from Women's Aid, School Nurses and VOICE.

We are having a joint Killing with Kindness/keep safe at Christmas event in the Grosvenor Centre on Tuesday 6th December from 11am until 2pm. It will be NBC Community Safety, Police and NAASH. Messages we will be getting out are the usual Killing with Kindness messages plus keeping safe while Christmas shopping, keeping your presents safe from burglars, keeping safe on a night out.

Councillor Anna King
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement



Cabinet Member Report for Housing and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council

12th December 2016

Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter

I am delighted to report that, with the help and generous support of local businesses and dozens of volunteers, the building works and decoration are now complete.

The provision of an emergency nightshelter will play a vital role in helping us to end the need for people to sleep rough in Northampton. It will also ensure that, when someone is sleeping rough, or is at risk of sleeping rough, they can immediately be offered a place to stay that is safe, warm and dry while they engage with the services best placed to assess and address their needs.

We are now in the process of recruiting a couple of staff and a large team of volunteers to run the nightshelter and, as soon as we are ready – and we have enough volunteers – the nightshelter will be up and running and start to make a difference. We are expecting it to open in January 2017.

In the meantime, if the temperatures are forecast to fall below freezing for at least three consecutive nights, the nightshelter will operate as a short-term severe weather shelter.

Anyone wishing to support the nightshelter (by becoming a volunteer or donating equipment, furniture or money) should visit the Northampton Nightshelter webpage on the Council's website:

www.northampton.gov.uk/northamptonnightshelter

Social Lettings Agency

I am very pleased that the Government is now taking action to crack down on the fees that letting agents have been charging tenants who are looking for private rented accommodation.

Work is almost complete on the development of an innovative, viable and sustainable operating model for our social lettings agency and, as soon as the business case has been signed off, the recruitment of the staff will commence.

The main purpose of the social lettings agency is to help the Council to improve standards in Northampton's private rented sector, bring empty homes back into use and make it easier for people to access good quality, well managed, affordable private rented accommodation.

It is intended, also, that the social lettings agency will prevent homelessness, reduce the Council's reliance on B&B and substantially reduce the Council's expenditure on temporary accommodation.

Councillor Stephen Hibbert
Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing

Appendices: 2



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

12th December 2016

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Borough Secretary

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Report Title | Amendment to the Constitution – Officer Delegated Powers in relation to the Partnership Grant Allocation Process |
|---------------------|---|

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Full Council’s approval to amend the Constitution in respect of the Chief Executive’s delegated power to disburse and manage grants to community and voluntary organisations through the partnership grant allocation process.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Full Council is recommended to approve the amendment to the Constitution detailed in Appendix 2.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 On 16th November 2016, Cabinet:

- a) agreed (subject to approval each year by Full Council of the relevant budget) that funding for a period of three years may be granted to community and voluntary organisations, through the partnership grant allocation process; and
- b) requested that Full Council make the necessary changes to the Council’s Constitution, as advised by the Borough Secretary, to give authority to the Chief Executive to award funding for a period of three years, in accordance with recommendation above.

3.1.2 The background information is set out in the Cabinet report which is attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 Decision details

- 3.2.1 The Council's Constitution contains the Scheme of Delegations to Officers. The Chief Executive has a number of specific officer delegated powers including a power to disburse and manage grants to voluntary and community organisations. In the case of grants over £500, this delegated power must be exercised in consultation with a panel of Members (known as the Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel). The relevant extract from the Constitution is set out below:

“...the Chief Executive shall also exercise the following powers:...

1.2.11 all matters related to the disbursement and management of grants within the Budget for those purposes approved on behalf of the Council, after consultation in the case of grants in excess of £500, with such Members as may be from time to time nominated on behalf of the Council (whether on a temporary or other basis)”;

- 3.2.2 It is recommended that Full Council approves an amendment to the Constitution as detailed in Appendix 2 to update this Chief Executive delegated power to reflect the November 2016 Cabinet decision. The revised delegation would expressly delegate power to the Chief Executive to award grants for a period of three years, with such funding being subject to approval by Full Council each year of the relevant budget.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 As a matter of policy, Cabinet agreed that there should be an option to provide three years of grant funding to voluntary and community organisations, subject to approval of the relevant budget by Full Council each year. This report therefore recommends that Full Council approves the change necessary to the Constitution to enable officers to implement this policy through the partnership grant allocation process.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report which only seeks to amend the Constitution. As explained in the Cabinet report, the ability to make a grant for a period of three years, (rather than being restricted to making a grant for a one year period) does not introduce any additional expenditure. There will still be a total maximum amount agreed in the Council budget each year, out of which grants can be allocated.
- 4.2.2 It should be noted that there would only be delegated power to make a grant for a period of three years, subject to there being budgetary approval each year. Therefore, if the budget for partnership grants was reduced in the Budget agreed by Full Council at the start of the second or third year of the grant period, this could affect the availability of the grant for those subsequent years. This caveat would therefore be reflected in the Service Level

Agreement between the Council and any organisation in receipt of a grant for a period in excess of a year.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The Local Government Act 2000 allows for arrangements to be made for the discharge of executive functions by officers of the authority. The delegation of power to the Chief Executive referred to in this report is made pursuant to these provisions.

4.3.2 It is noted that the delegated power in question could potentially be used by the Chief Executive to make a Key Decision (eg. in the event that the total amount of a grant over a period of up to three years, exceeded £250,000). In such cases, the specific legal and Constitution requirements relating to the making of Key Decisions must be complied with.

4.4 Equality

4.3.1 There are no equalities considerations arising directly from this report.

4.3.2 When a delegated decision is made in relation to any individual grant application, due regard must be given to equality and diversity considerations. An equality impact assessment was last undertaken in respect of the Partnership Grant Process in April 2016.

4.5 Other Implications

4.4.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer
0300 330 7000

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| Appendices |
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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Report Title | Partnership Grant Allocation Process – Introduction Of A Three Year Funding Option |
|---------------------|---|

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cabinet Meeting Date: | 16 th November 2016 |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Within Policy: | No |
| Policy Document: | Yes |
| Directorate: | Customer and Communities |
| Accountable Cabinet Member: | Cllr Anna King |
| Ward(s) | Borough Wide |

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the approval of Cabinet to include an option of three year funding, for community and voluntary organisations who apply through the Partnership Grant Process. Previously, this fund has only allowed organisations to apply for one year funding.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees (subject to approval each year by Full Council of the relevant budget) that funding for a period of three years may be granted to community and voluntary organisations, through the partnership grant allocation process.
- 2.2 That Cabinet requests that Full Council makes the necessary changes to the Council's Constitution, as advised by the Borough Secretary, to give authority to the Chief Executive to award funding for a period of three years, in accordance with recommendation 2.1 above.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 There is an existing budget for the Partnership Fund of £550k which is administered through a grant application process. This is an open process which is available for all community and voluntary organisations to apply. The process is conducted annually and runs from July-June, the funding is for one year only.
- 3.1.2 The council awards partnership grants to community and voluntary sector organisations because there are some activities, initiatives and projects that that sector, for a range of reasons, is better placed to deliver than the council is. Therefore by awarding partnership grants the council is able to achieve better outcomes and/or increased value for money.
- 3.1.3 A Service Level Agreement between each of the funded organisations and Northampton Borough Council is established and a number of outcomes developed, to which 6 and 12 monthly monitoring is expected.
- 3.1.4 The Council's Partnership Fund is allocated with the support of the Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel (CEFAP), year on year. The panel is made up of five cross party elected members and three community and voluntary sector representatives, including the Chief Executive of Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire.
- 3.1.5 Each organisation is asked to clearly demonstrate how they would deliver against the corporate priorities of the Council, demonstrate value for money; be committed to working in partnership and identify and evidence clear community demand and need for the services they offer to the public within the Borough of Northampton.
- 3.1.6 Although three year funding option would be subject to Full Council's approval of the relevant budget each year, this longer term option would provide local voluntary and community organisations with greater security and sustainability. It would also create a more efficient grants process for the Council. Three year funding would enable community and voluntary organisations to plan ahead more effectively, which in turn will enable them to better mitigate the impact of the reduction in funding during that period.
- 3.1.7 The option of three year funding would be detailed within the guidance and training that is prepared and delivered as part of the application process for funding.
- 3.1.8 The offer of a grant for just one year would remain. It is recognised and supported by the CEFAP Panel that not all organisations will be eligible and not all projects would be appropriate for three year funding.
- 3.1.9 As well as benefitting the grant recipients, three year funding benefits the council in that the council will get better outcomes arising from the enabling of longer term projects and the opening up of opportunities for accessing other external funding pots.

3.1.10 Grant processing time will also be reduced as three year grant applications will only need to be submitted once every three years rather than annually, although monitoring and review activity will remain unchanged.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 As previously stated, the funding would be subject to Full Council's approval of the relevant budget each year which would be clearly reflected in the Service Level Agreement's for all of the organisations that are funded.

3.2.2 CEFAP would continue to have oversight of these grants, receive reports, presentations and monitoring information for all organisations that are funded through the Partnership Grant.

3.2.3 To enable grants to be allocated for a period of three years, it will be necessary for the Borough Secretary to take a report to Full council proposing the necessary amendment to the Council's constitution.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 To continue to administer the Partnership Grant on an annual basis, with community and voluntary organisations applying to the Partnership Grant year on year.

3.3.2 To introduce the option of three year funding, (subject to funds within budget) for community and voluntary organisations that are applying to the partnership grant.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 If the recommendation of this report is agreed, it will be necessary to amend the Partnership grant policy and process to reflect that, in certain circumstances and with specified caveats, a grant allocation for three years may be made

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There is no additional expenditure arising from the proposal set out in this report. The Partnership Grant pot is unaffected in that the amount of money that is allocated from it each year is unchanged. This report simply introduces an option that allows for a three year grant period whereas previously grants could only be made for a period of one year.

4.2.2 It is proposed that the three year grant option is paid in three annual payments that coincide with annual grant payments. Three year grants will be subject to the same rigorous monitoring as is applied to annual grants and are entirely subject to Full Council's approval of the relevant budget each year.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. Any extension to the funding will be supported by a formal amendment to the existing Service Level Agreements.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Partnership Grant process in April 2016. 42 applications were received through the partnership grant process for 2016/17. In total 29 organisations were funded through the partnership grant and 8 through the small grants, most of which include the delivery of specific services around the protected characteristics.

4.4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the process, each year.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 CEFAP have been consulted and are in support of the recommendation.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 Every project/proposal is asked how it will deliver against the corporate objectives of the council including the following:

4.6.1.1 Northampton on Track – Successful and vibrant Town, increased job opportunities

4.6.1.2 Making Every £ Go Further – Shared services, delivery of value for money services, resources targeted in areas most in need

4.6.1.3 Better Homes For The Future – People provided with timely advice and information to enable them to make informed choices, local housing needs provided, vulnerable people supported

4.6.1.4 Creating Empowered Communities – Empowered local communities with a greater capacity to become involved in community life, promote integration and cohesion

4.6.1.5 Promoting Health and Wellbeing – improved public health, widen participation in leisure activities across all sections of the community

4.6.1.6 Responding To Your Needs – Appropriate support provided to those most need, services are fair, accessible and responsive to individual needs, residents and customers feel informed and engaged in service quality and design

5. Background Papers

None

Julie Seddon
Director of Customer and Communities

Extract from Northampton Borough Council Constitution
Part 8 – Scheme of Delegations to Officer
Part B – Specific Provisions

Current wording of delegated power

“...the Chief Executive shall also exercise the following powers:...

- 1.2.11 *all matters related to the disbursement and management of grants within the Budget for those purposes approved on behalf of the Council, after consultation in the case of grants in excess of £500, with such Members as may be from time to time nominated on behalf of the Council (whether on a temporary or other basis)”;*

Proposed revised wording of delegated power for Full Council approval

“...the Chief Executive shall also exercise the following powers:...

- 1.2.11 *all matters related to the disbursement and management of grants [to voluntary and community organisations through the partnership grant allocation process], for a grant period of up to three years, subject to approval each year by Full Council of the relevant budget, and after consultation in the case of grants in excess of £500, with such Members as may from time to time be nominated on behalf of the Council, whether on a temporary or other basis (known as the Community Enabling Fund Advisory Panel)”;*

Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
12th December 2016

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Chief Executive

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Report Title | Remuneration of the post of Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning |
|---------------------|--|

1. Purpose

- 1.1 In relation to the post of Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, to agree to payment of a salary package in excess of £100,000; and to authorise the payment of a consolidated market-related supplement.

2. Recommendations

That Council:

- 2.1 approves a pay package for the post of Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning at a fixed point of £124,000 per annum, (which includes a consolidated market supplement of £14,897 per annum);
- 2.2 recognising that the Council’s current Pay Policy states that it is not the Council’s normal policy to pay market supplements to Chief Officers, specifically approves the payment of a consolidated market supplement of £14,897 per annum to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning on this occasion for the reasons explained in this report.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 On the 7th March 2016, the Council approved its Pay Policy for 2016/17. This Policy is reviewed annually as required by statute.
- 3.1.2 The Pay Policy Statement includes that the Appointments and Appeals Committee has the delegated authority from Council to make appointments of Chief Officers other than the Chief Executive (which is reserved to Full

Council) and to approve remuneration of Directors within the Council's approved pay grades for such posts.

- 3.1.3 Notwithstanding the above, any remuneration packages not already approved by the Full Council under its policy requires further Full Council approval if over £100,000 per annum in total.
- 3.1.4 The Appointments and Appeals Committee have been seeking to appoint a Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning. A full process was carried out earlier this year and despite a comprehensive search it was not possible to attract a candidate suitable to lead this Directorate.
- 3.1.5 After a review of the position, including taking advice on the salaries being offered for similar posts elsewhere, the Appointments and Appeals Committee decided to carry out a further recruitment exercise to see if a suitable candidate could be identified if the Council were willing to consider a market supplement expected to involve a salary of around £120,000 with more being possible for an exceptional candidate. Appendix One shows the information gathered at the time the Committee made that decision
- 3.1.6 This recruitment process produced a much stronger long list and short list for the position of Director and on the 25th November 2016 the Committee met to interview final candidates. A preferred candidate has been identified, the post offered subject to Council agreeing remuneration, and to references, medical and contract. The candidate has accepted the position verbally subject to these matters also.
- 3.1.7 The candidate is currently employed at a salary of £130,000 and has been in receipt of a bonus payment from his current employer. The bonus is discretionary but has been paid on an annual basis and, whilst it is variable, it can be a significant five figure sum.
- 3.1.8 The candidate has been offered (subject to Council's approval of the recommendations in this Report) appointment on a fixed point salary of £124,000 and has indicated acceptance of that level of remuneration. The Committee is happy to recommend that to Council.
- 3.1.9 The current consolidated salary range for Directors is £95,994 to £109,103. This proposed appointment therefore would include a market supplement of £14,897 against the present top point of the consolidated part of the Director scale.
- 3.1.10 The Pay Policy Statement makes it clear that it is not the Council's normal practice to pay market supplements to Chief Officers, and therefore any proposal to include a market supplement in a Director's remuneration package needs to be agreed by Council as does any new remuneration package of over £100,000.
- 3.1.11 The Committee met on 30th November 2016 and agreed to recommend remuneration of £124,000, as a fixed point without any further scale or grade progression for an appointment to the post of Director of Regeneration Enterprise and Planning having tested the market thoroughly.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The proposal is to make a remuneration decision that is outside of the Council's ordinary pay policy to include a consolidated market supplement in the remuneration for a Chief Officer post. This is necessary in order to be able to offer a salary in the market sufficient to attract a suitable candidate for this position.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 The additional cost of the market supplement will be met within the overall budget for the Directorate in 2017/18 and future years. The gross cost will be approximately £18,600 at on-costs rates.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The legal implications are set out in the Report.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 The Equality Act 2010 implements the legal principle of gender pay equality. The use of a market related pay element does carry some risk as it enhances an individual's role, in pay terms when compared to other roles. However the legislation does allow pay disparity so long as this does not arise because of gender differences outlined in the material factor defence.
- 4.4.2 In this particular case it has not been possible to appoint a candidate at the current grade for the post as evidenced by the Council's attempts to recruit to this post because of competitive market factors. The Council believes that there is sufficient evidence to justify this market salary.

David Kennedy, Chief Executive, 01604 837726

Appendix One: Assessment of salaries offered for similar/like roles

LGSS were tasked to undertake a remuneration comparison exercise for similar roles in other areas of the UK. This exercise highlighted the fact that remuneration for similar roles exceeded the salary on offer for the role at NBC. Examples are listed below

- *Metropolitan Borough Development Company – Delivery Director £140k (package – basic salary £125k)*
- *London Borough – Director, Regeneration of key urban area - £124k*
- *Metropolitan Borough Council – Executive Director of Place - £117-122k*
- *Metropolitan Borough Council – Director of Place and Regeneration £119-121k*
- *Unitary Council (of a town area) – Director of Environment and Regeneration £127k*

LGSS have also benchmarked the NBC role with similar roles in other local authorities by using the Hay networking group, this has shown further evidence that the role requires a higher salary to compete in the market, as follows:

- *Unitary Council – Executive Director – Economy, Environment and Culture - £116k*
- *City Council – Strategic Director – City Development and Neighbourhoods - £120k*
- *Metropolitan Borough Council – Strategic Director Regeneration & Environment - £113k*
- *City Council – Corporate Director Place - £123k*

Appendices: 0



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
12th December 2016

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Management Board

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Report Title | External Auditor appointment – extension and future procurement |
|---------------------|--|

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Council of the extension to the current appointment of KPMG as External Auditors to the Council, and for Council to agree the process for appointing external auditors for the audit of the 2018/19 accounts onwards

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council accept the proposal from Audit Committee that Northampton opt to join the national scheme for selecting external auditor appointments for the five financial years commencing 1st April 2018 being offered by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), and for officers to formally respond by the deadline of 9th March 2017 to be part of the scheme.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The current appointment of KPMG as the council’s external auditors up to and including the audit of the 2016/17 accounts was made by the Audit Commission who were disbanded in 2015. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government then delegated statutory functions on a transitional basis from the Audit Commission to PSAA. The Chief Finance Officer received notification from PSSA in September 2016 that the current contract with KPMG would be extended to include audit of the 2017/18 accounts.

- 3.1.2 This is an extension of the appointment made under section 3 of the Audit Commission Act for the audit of the accounts up to 2016/17, under the audit contracts previously let by the Audit Commission. The auditor appointment has been extended for one year as a consequence of the extension of the transitional arrangements made by the Department of Communities and Local Government. The appointment of KPMG LLP under the current audit contracts will conclude with the completion of the audit of the accounts for 2017/18.
- 3.1.3 The authority has benefited from reduction in fees in the order of 50% compared with historic levels. This has been the result of a combination of factors including new contracts negotiated nationally with the firms of accountants and savings from closure of the Audit Commission.
- 3.1.4 For the audit of the 2018/19 accounts onwards Local Authorities will be required to either set up an 'Auditor Panel', or opt into any sector-led body that may be established as the appointing person under the Local Audit and Accountability Act and relevant regulations. The key areas that the auditor panel (or equivalent) would be responsible for advising an authority on are as follows:
- the selection and appointment of the auditor
 - whether the authority should adopt a policy on obtaining non-audit services from the auditor, including the contents of such a policy
 - any proposal by the authority to enter into a liability limitation agreement
 - maintaining an independent relationship with its auditor
 - the outcome of any investigation of an auditor's resignation from office, if this occurs, or
 - on any proposal to remove a local auditor from office
- 3.1.5 The scope of the audit will still be specified nationally, the National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for writing the Code of Audit Practice which all firms appointed to carry out the Council's audit must follow. Not all accounting firms will be eligible to compete for the work, they will need to demonstrate that they have the required skills and experience and be registered with a Registered Supervising Body approved by the Financial Reporting Council. The registration process has not yet commenced and so the number of firms is not known but it is reasonable to expect that the list of eligible firms may include the top 10 or 12 firms in the country, including our current auditor. It is unlikely that small local independent firms will meet the eligibility criteria
- 3.1.6 The current fee audit fee structure was as a result of national contract negotiations by the Audit Commission, with audit firms prepared to offer substantial discounts to achieve greater market share and offered maximum economies of scale

3.2 Decision details

3.2.1 There are three broad options available to local authorities in the future for the appointment of external auditors:

3.2.2 Option 1 - To make a stand-alone appointment

3.2.3 In order to make a stand-alone appointment the Council will need to set up an Auditor Panel. The members of the panel must be wholly or a majority independent members as defined by the Act. Independent members for this purpose are independent appointees, this excludes current and former elected members (or officers) and their close families and friends. This means that elected members will not have a majority input to assessing bids and choosing which firm of accountants to award a contract for the Council's external audit.

3.2.4 Advantages/benefits

- Setting up an auditor panel allows the Council to take maximum advantage of the new local appointment regime and have local input to the decision.

3.2.5 Disadvantages/risks

- Recruitment and servicing of the Auditor Panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract is estimated by the LGA to cost in the order of £15k plus on going expenses and allowances
- The Council will not be able to take advantage of reduced fees that may be available through joint or national procurement contracts.
- The assessment of bids and decision on awarding contracts will be taken by independent appointees and not solely by elected members.

3.2.6 Option 2 - Set up a Joint Auditor Panel/local joint procurement arrangements

3.2.7 The Act enables the Council to join with other authorities to establish a joint auditor panel. Again this will need to be constituted of wholly or a majority of independent appointees (members). Further legal advice will be required on the exact constitution of such a panel having regard to the obligations of each Council under the Act and the Council will need to liaise with other local authorities to assess the appetite for such an arrangement.

3.2.8 Advantages/benefits

- The costs of setting up the panel, running the bidding exercise and negotiating the contract will be shared across a number of authorities.
- There is greater opportunity for negotiating some economies of scale by being able to offer a larger combined contract value to the firms.

3.2.9 Disadvantages/risks

- The decision making body will be further removed from local input, with potentially no input from elected members where a wholly independent auditor panel is used or possible only one elected member representing each Council, depending on the constitution agreed with the other bodies involved.
- The choice of auditor could be complicated where individual Councils have independence issues. An independence issue occurs where the auditor has recently or is currently carrying out work such as consultancy or advisory work for the Council. Where this occurs some auditors may be prevented from being appointed by the terms of their professional standards. There is a risk that if the joint auditor panel choose a firm that is conflicted for this Council then the Council may still need to make a separate appointment with all the attendant costs and loss of economies possible through joint procurement.

3.2.10 Option 3 - Opt-in to a sector led body

3.2.11 In response to the consultation on the new arrangement the LGA successfully lobbied for Councils to be able to 'opt-in' to a Sector Led Body (SLB) appointed by the Secretary of State under the Act. An SLB would have the ability to negotiate contracts with the firms nationally, maximising the opportunities for the most economic and efficient approach to procurement of external audit on behalf of the whole sector.

3.2.12 Advantages/benefits

- The costs of setting up the appointment arrangements and negotiating fees would be shared across all opt-in authorities
- By offering large contract values the firms would be able to offer better rates and lower fees than are likely to result from local negotiation
- Any conflicts at individual authorities would be managed by the SLB who would have a number of contracted firms to call upon.
- The appointment process would not be led by locally appointed independent members. Instead a separate body set up to act in the collective interests of the 'opt-in' authorities. The current approved SLB is PSAA who will be utilising the knowledge and experience acquired through the setting up of the transitional arrangements.

3.2.13 Disadvantages/risks

- Individual elected members will have less opportunity for direct involvement in the appointment process other than through the LGA and/or stakeholder representative groups.

- In order for the SLB to be viable and to be placed in the strongest possible negotiating position the SLB will need Councils to indicate their intention to opt-in before final contract prices are known.

3.3 Conclusions

3.3.1 The Council have until December 2017 to make an external auditor appointment, and in order to achieve this deadline will need to have made a decision over which procurement route to follow by early 2017. This will allow the auditors to be in place for April 2018 so they can commence interim audit work during the 2018/19 financial year.

3.3.2 The Local Government Association (LGA) have supported the development of the Sector Led Body – PSAA, which has now been approved to nationally procure public sector external audit contracts. The LGA is strongly supportive of this nationally procured approach as it believes this will offer best value to councils by reducing set-up costs and having the potential to negotiate the lowest fees. It will also have the resources to monitor the standard of audit contracts and ensure consistency.

3.3.3 The Council received a formal invitation from PSAA on 27th October to opt-in to the national scheme for auditor appointments. An estimated timetable was provided as follows:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| • Invitation to opt in issued | 27 October 2016 |
| • Closing date for receipt of notices to opt in | 09 March 2017 |
| • Contract notice published | 20 February 2017 |
| • Award audit contracts | By end of June 2017 |
| • Consult on and make auditor appointments | By end of December 2017 |
| • Consult on and publish scale fees | By end of March 2018 |

3.3.4 Informal discussions with neighbouring Local Authority finance staff indicate that most are considering the benefits of a sector led approach by opting-in to the PSAA national scheme. However they would like to work with the PSAA to try and secure a common external auditor where possible to enable a consistent audit approach across the area.

3.3.5 The Council's Audit Committee having considered the different options agreed with the officer recommendation that the authority take part in the national scheme being offered by the PSAA, and this is their recommendation to Council for approval

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 There is no existing council policy on external auditor appointments as previously legislation has meant that external auditors have been selected for Local Authorities by the Audit Commission.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 There is no immediate risk to the authority, although at this stage it is not possible to estimate whether the cost of external audit provision will remain at the current reduced levels even if the council opts to be part of the national scheme.
- 4.2.2 If options 1 or 2 above are selected as the preferred route, then the cost and time resource of establishing a local or joint Auditor Panel will need to be estimated and included in future Council budgets. This would include the cost of recruiting independent appointees (members), servicing the Panel, running a bidding and tender evaluation process, letting a contract and paying members fees and allowances
- 4.2.3 It is likely that inclusion in the national scheme being offered by PSAA will provide the greatest chance of obtaining competitive fee rates and would remove the costs of establishing an auditor panel.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) requires a relevant authority to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year. Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the authority must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor. Section 8 provides that where a relevant authority is a local authority operating executive arrangements, the function of appointing a local auditor to audit its accounts is not the responsibility of an executive of the authority under those arrangements;
- 4.3.2 Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor: the authority must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the authority to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the authority.
- 4.3.3 Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a Sector Led Body to become the appointing person.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Finance staff have consulted with other finance staff in neighbouring Local Authorities, and the Council's own Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.

4.5.2 Audit Committee were consulted in November 2016 and their recommendation is included in this report

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

5. Background Papers

5.1 External Auditor Appointments report to Audit Committee on 14 November 2016.

Chris Randall, Strategic Finance Manager, LGSS, 0776 936 5372

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| <p>Appendices: 0</p> |
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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
12th December 2016

Agenda Status: Public

Directorate: Borough Secretary

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Report Title | Changes to Committee Places |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|

1. Purpose

1.1 Council is asked to approve changes to the membership of the Committees listed below.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Councillor Parekh replaces Councillor M Markham on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 That Councillor M Markham replaces Councillor Bottwood as Chair of the Audit Committee.

2.3 That Councillor Oldham replaces Councillor Parekh on the Audit Committee.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1 The Conservative Group wish to makes changes to Committee Places

3.2 The Council's decision-making structures and bodies, and the memberships of those bodies were approved at the Annual meeting of Council on 19th May 2016 and were subsequently changed at the Council meeting held on the 7th November 2016 following a change in leadership.

3.3 Notification has been received from the Conservative Group of changes to group nominations to Committees.

3.4 Appointments to all other Committees and Consultation Appointments agreed by Council on the 19th May 2016 and the 7th November 2016 remain unchanged.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 None

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 None

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no legal implications

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no Equality implications

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 None

5. Background Papers

5.1 None

**Francis Fernandes
Borough Solicitor**